



The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses including Health, Career, and Faith

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Newly updated and expanded to commemorate its 20th anniversary—this classic resource helps people complete the grieving process and move toward recovery and happiness

Incomplete recovery from grief can have a lifelong negative effect on the capacity for happiness. Drawing from their own histories as well as from others', the authors illustrate how it is possible to recover from grief and regain energy and spontaneity. Based on a proven program, *The Grief Recovery Handbook* offers grievers the specific actions needed to move beyond loss.

New material in this edition includes:

How to choose which loss you should work on first
How to deal with growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home
Loss of faith
Loss of career
Loss of health
And much, much more.

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From Reader Review *The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses including Health, Career, and Faith* for online ebook

Alana says

I really appreciated this book for the first half. I related to so many things, especially all the unhelpful phrases well-meaning people tend to say, like "You'll find someone better" or "It's all for the best," or "God has a plan." Hearing someone else say that none of these things is remotely helpful and learning ways that we often learn to repress our grief rather than work it out is very encouraging. However, I strongly disagreed with many statements made in the second half, including the complete disregard for faith and its role in the healing process. I understood the point the authors were trying to make in that grief transcends religious boundaries, but to rule it out in the grief process entirely is not only foolish but, in my opinion, hurtful. And the idea that one should never ask for forgiveness from someone is equally foolish. Yes, I understand the point that one needs to take responsibility for one's own actions and say "sorry" where necessary, understanding that forgiveness may or may not be given, but to deny that forgiveness should ever be asked for? And they stated that never under any circumstances should you seek out someone to tell them you forgive them. While certainly there are times when someone does not even know they've wronged you and all this would do is incite someone, there are also times when someone knows they've done wrong and you may have withheld forgiveness for a very long time, only later realizing that you should forgive. In this time of instance, offering forgiveness can go a long way toward restoring a relationship.

All that aside, there are some very good insights. However, considering they mentioned that when the book was written "the world is still reeling from the death of Diana," I think some changes may have been made in the way we look at and treat grief.

However, if you are grieving or know someone that is, I highly recommend the first half of the book, especially to know what NOT to say when doing your very best to help your struggling loved one.

2.5/5

Alma :) says

I read this book a few years ago, while I was in the midst of an unraveling relationship. I was coping with that loss and a very difficult year and dealing with 20 years of unresolved grief from my father's death when I was six. At the time, I had taken baby steps toward healing by finally opening up to my friends and loved ones, but I was having a great deal of difficulty moving on. I decided to take a course on Death and Dying as part of my degree program, and this book was required reading. Not only did I have to read it, I had to do all the exercises and share them with people in the course.

I hated every single minute of it--mostly because, I think, I wasn't altogether ready to rip off the scabs from years of suffering. I was also never an open person, so it felt trite and intrusive. Despite that feeling, I gave it my all. I rolled my eyes a lot and complained a lot. I didn't think it helped at all. Shortly thereafter, my Mama got terminally ill. I had to basically give up my life to take care of her. I found myself face-to-face with so much grief in such a short amount of time that I didn't know how to even breathe. But I realized that I was able to face the grief this time because of the work I'd done with this book. After my Mama passed away, I

used the techniques in the book to deal with these new pains. And I've since tried to do these things for every unresolved event/painful relationship in my life.

This book is not miraculous, but it does give you a method of doing the work you need to do. For me, no matter what grief it is, the key is to acknowledge it exists. That's what this book does. It provides a gate to fully acknowledging the pain in your life--sometimes, the pain is connected to other pain and you're unaware of it. It's a first step, and it will not "fix" you. Only you can do that, and you can take these tools and make them work for you. For the critics who say it focuses on divorce and death too much--I disagree. The technique is really what's valuable here--not the circumstance. I found it helpful to just skip to the techniques instead of reading the commentary. The technique can be built upon and interpreted differently, but it will help shed light on different things. It's true that nothing is one size fits all. You have to be willing to work--and willing to fall down multiple times. I recommend this technique as one part of a strategy of coping. Another part would be building support networks for yourself, seeking alternate ways of expressing yourself, and (of course) therapy.

It's been seven years since my Mama died, and I am still dealing with the losses in my life on a daily basis. But they no longer eat away at me, and I can face them with a certainty that I will survive them. You will never be the same, but you can face your life and learn to carry your burdens with grace.

Angelica Taggart says

I read this a long time ago -- and led a class on it -- it was powerful stuff!

Melanie says

I highly recommend this book to anyone dealing with any grief in their lives. It's very hands on but worth the work it takes. It was very helpful for me and gives me a good place to go. Rereading my notes and assignments is always good for me if I'm struggling on one particular day. It helped me map out my life, document the major life events, and realize what affected me most. Then they help you through the process, talking you through each step and why it's important, and giving examples from their own lives. Best self-help book I've ever read.

Carrie Daws says

We don't like to talk about grief and mourning. Instead, when a relationship ends through death, divorce, or other loss, we tell ourselves and our friends to "Be strong," or "They're in a better place," or "You're better off without them." None of this is truly helpful to the person trying to sort through the feelings of pain and trauma and regroup themselves in trust and love. This book is different.

While acknowledging the plethora of situations that push a person into a grieving situation, the authors gently let readers know that what they are feeling--sadness, betrayal, anger--it's all legitimate and shouldn't be buried. Then they encourage people through a simple, step-by-step process to deal with the emotions, heal from the loss, and move on with life.

Stacy says

They spend a lot of time in the first 1/3-1/2 of the book belaboring how our culture doesn't address grief well, and I found this tedious and pedestrian. This might be because I work in the helping-humans field, so these concepts are already well-worn in my brain. The good news is that it's a fast read, so you can cruise through this pretty quickly. They suggest you go back and re-read this section, to which I say "nope." I was initially skeptical of their process for working through grief, but ultimately I do think it makes a lot of sense. I'm still too busy and too raw to work the steps just yet, but I'm planning to keep the book and circle back around to the exercises maybe later this year.

Katrine Austin says

This book is simply profound for anyone dealing with unresolved grief. In my opinion, it therefore is great reading for most people (even if they may not realize it). But more, it tasks you with actions to take, and those behavioral changes and homework done on oneself are what makes this program work as it does. This program is not for the faint of heart, or for those afraid to look deep within, or simply don't buy into the fact that mere reading will not cut it. Hospice is an amazing philosophy and I'm grateful my community offered this for my work with and about Jay. I now have tools in my emotional reservoir to look hard at my other losses, see what else is unresolved, and do the work moving forward...all in the noble goal of stronger happiness and promoting the capability to stay and appreciate every present moment and the full breadth of emotions life offers.

Vicki G says

It took me forever to find a partner. I know you don't HAVE to have one in this edition of the book, but I thought working by myself would be a disaster in terms of being completely honest and accountable, b/c I think I'm too close to myself to be able to do it.

Some people can do it alone but I had to have a partner.

I just hope I can handle it when he talks about what happened to him.

He was trapped in Tower 1 for over an hour and was burned across 40% of his body surface. He lost his entire face after being set on fire by part of a fireball.

The first words out of his mouth about the forgiveness concept was: "I'm not forgiving Osama bin Laden. I'd rather beat his ugly face even uglier, tho the attempt would probably be futile since even UGLY is afraid of HIS face."

But he changed his mind after a guy from the Grief Recovery Institute wrote him a short email saying he (the guy from the Institute) doesn't understand how it must have felt to go through that.

My friend said he had never heard anyone say that. Even his mom, whom he loves more than anyone in the world, said she understands.

So he decided to forgive Osama bin Laden, except neither he nor I have come to that part in the process yet.

N Klepacki says

I first learned of this book through Jim Beaver's Memoir of his wife, Cecily Adams in "Life's That Way" -I wish I'd read this years ago. I've read so much of the 'self help' and 'Twelve Step' genre over the years that I've become a bit jaded about a lot of it. Friedman throws a whole new approach and sensibility (tempered with good humor) that transcends the usual "Pull Yourself Up By Your Bootstraps" or "Let Go and Let God Run the Dumptruck Over Her/Him" (had to throw in a funny, there) preaching that a lot of self guidance books tend to sink into. I've experienced two, severe, devastating losses during the last 18 months - and this time, I mean to learn and heal instead of making the same stupid 'repetition compulsion' driven mistakes.

Jessica says

The third section of the Grief Recovery Handbook details steps a grieving person can take in order to complete their grief work, and is helpful. However, the first two sections of the book explain, in detail, how most of society has been trained incorrectly on how to grieve, and how unhelpful this is. While I agree with this, it can be a bit much to read; as I felt it tore down everything I knew before it finally started to build me back up again, and if the authors' specific methods don't work for a particular reader, they may be left with less of a positive outlook than when they began reading.

Kimber says

I wish I could give this book ten stars....I definitely need this on my book shelf. We all go through griefs but we live in a society that doesn't allow us to grieve, and most people never learn this. This book can help so many people. Everyone should read this. Grief is something we will all experience in our lifetimes.

Paula Kirman says

A good plan for finding completion after loss.

Michael Amendolara says

Excellent necessary book

This book will give you the information and plan in order to end the pain relating to anything or anyone you have lost - no matter how severe the pain is. I have applied these techniques many times to the loss of people and pets in my life. It has always taken away the pain of the loss.

LT says

This book saved my life! While dealing with mom's sudden death and my dad's impending terminal illness, I felt that no one understood me or wanted to hear about my sorrow. I decided to seek out some help in alternative ways and ran across this book. Their no-nonsense approach was refreshing and provided some much needed honesty and candor about a topic that everyone else was afraid to discuss with me.

Nancy Freund says

A tricky review to write, because this self-help book makes an important promise, as self-help books generally do. I'd think anyone reading my review of it might want to know whether the authors and the book deliver on that promise. That is, will the grief caused by death, divorce, trauma, moving, abuse, loss of career or trust or safety, loss of faith or mobility or physical or mental ability actually be lessened as a result of actions described in this guidebook? I don't know... but I do believe the authors' sincerity in presenting their methods and in supporting the workshops and lectures they have created to accompany the book. I believe they have helped thousands of grieving people "complete their grief," as the book puts it, or lighten their loads -- as I might.

I have not worked through the process yet. THE book's structure is clean and the process is well presented. Still, some of the steps felt repetitive and unnecessary to me, in reading them, so I found myself reading on, page by page, trying to glean what I could to then make a decision about what action I would possibly take later. I am still at that stage now, deciding what action I might take. Interestingly, I do feel a bit lighter already. I suppose inadvertently, I've confronted a few important questions involving my mom's recent death and other losses, and even without meaning to, I undertook the initial steps of the guidebook's process as a result. So although I did not create my own "loss history graph" to then convert to a "relationship graph," nor did I write a good-bye letter of completeness, I did gain a clearer understanding of what grief is and why it hits so hard, sneaks up on us even when we think we're doing fine, and why the same messages may run on repeat in our heads, long after the person is gone and the problems with that person seemed to have already been resolved. So if that's already the case just from reading the book, I'd imagine that a thorough process of working through the steps (with a group or a partner, or alone) would indeed deliver some excellent results. This book was recommended to me by a trusted friend, and I'm glad I managed to get a copy to keep. I read every bit of it with genuine interest, and I'm sure I will refer back to it over time.

The edition I read was the 20th anniversary expanded edition from 2009, that I believe includes new passages on Alzheimers, my specific interest, and PTSD.
