



The Grief Center Library

For Young Children

***Gentle Willow: A Story for Children about Dying* by Joyce C. Mills and Cary Pillo**

One day, Amanda notices her friend, Gentle Willow, is a special kind of sick. Amanda and Gentle Willow, together with the support of their friends, journey to understand the implications of a terminal illness throughout this compassionate book. *Gentle Willow* additionally provides a helpful guide for parents in constructive ways to address death and dying with their children.

***Always and Forever* by Alan Durant and Debi Gilori**

Otter, Mole, Fox, and Hare lived happily together in a small house in the woods. Otter prepared scrumptious meals, Mole was responsible for the sewing and fixing, Hare tended a lovely vegetable garden, and Fox helped everyone to be happy and laugh. When Fox dies unexpectedly, his family has a hard time finding ways to be happy without him. Thanks to help from their friend Squirrel, Fox's family is able to remember all the happy times. In their hearts, memories, and laughter, Fox will be there always and forever.

***Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley**

Badger is dependable, reliable, and always ready to help his friends. Badger is also very old and wise; he knows the end of his life is approaching, and understands everything must someday die. After Badger's death, his friends are at first very sad because they all loved Badger very much. Winter comes and goes, and the animals begin to remember and share the wonderful things Badger taught them. Each animal has a special memory of Badger- a "parting gift" which grows more memorable every time it is passed on to others.



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***Bear's Last Journey* by Udo Weiglet and Cristina Kadmom**

When the animals heard that Bear was sick, they all rushed to his den to help. "My dear friends," says Bear, "I'm going on a special journey, one that every bear and every animal makes at the end of his life." Little Fox is sad and angry about the news, and needs help understanding what is happening to his dear friend. With honest and beautiful language, Bear explains what it means to die and how he will live on the memories of others. At the end of the book, all the animals agree that "none of us will forget Bear."

***Remembering Crystal* by Sebastian Loch**

Zelda is a bright young goose, and plays with her friend Crystal in the garden every day. Zelda and Crystal do many things together, like reading books, playing musical instruments, and swimming. Crystal had lived in the garden for many years, and was growing old. Zelda's goose friends tell her one day that Crystal has died. Zelda does not believe them, and goes on a fantastic journey to find her friend. Along the way, Zelda remembers all the wonderful things she learned from Crystal, and all the fun things they did together. When she returns home, Zelda realizes although Crystal is gone, she will always remember her friend.

***The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst**

Jeremy and Liza cannot sleep one night during a thunderstorm. To help them with their fears, their mother tells them of The Invisible String. She explains the Invisible String is made of love, and connects people who care about each other. This String reaches from heart to heart, and never goes away, even if someone is mad or sad. The Invisible String can reach all across the world, and even to people who are no longer alive.



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For Older Children

***Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Patterson**

Although Jess did not like Leslie the first time he met her (he was the fastest runner in 5th grade before she came along), they soon become fast friends. Jess and Leslie invent the magical land of Terabithia together, and have many adventures both there and at school together. After Leslie's unexpected death, Jess experiences anger, sadness, guilt, and grief, and is supported by his family and community. This novel was made into an excellent film (rated PG) in 2007.

***The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**

Described as “a tender tale of loneliness, friendship, love, and loss,” Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's much beloved story has a worldwide appeal, having been translated into over 250 languages. The Little Prince tells the tale of a cosmic prince who crash-landed on Earth and meets a similarly crash-landed French pilot. Over the course of eight days, the pilot and the little prince become close friends, and the prince shares stories of his fantastic travels (and insights into human nature). As their time together comes to an end, the pilot and the prince reflect on the nature of grief and loss together.

***Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling**

It is hard not be familiar with the famous Boy-Who-Lived. A closer look at the Harry Potter series, however, reveals a complex story about grief and recovery from loss. Being whisked away to a magical castle of witchcraft and wizardry does not protect Harry from experiencing loss. Among many other things, *Harry Potter* is an excellent example of utilizing social support following a loss, the importance of hope in the face of the impossible, and the continuing power of love after a loved one has died.



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Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

Set in our beloved Ozarks, *Where the Red Fern Grows* details the relationship between young Billy and his two Redbone Coonhounds. Billy, Old Dan, and Little Ann overcome many hardships and trials together, and Billy experiences several losses with which he must cope over the course of the novel. At the close of the novel, Billy learns that although he is no longer physically with Old Dan and Little Ann, his love for them remains.

A Summer to Die by Lois Lowry

Written in 1977 and just as relevant today, *A Summer to Die* is the first novel by Lois Lowry, whose other works include the world renowned “The Giver” and “Number the Stars.” 13 year old Meg has always been jealous of her sister Molly’s appearance and popularity with others. When Molly is diagnosed with a terminal illness, Meg begins to struggle with feelings of jealousy, sibling rivalry, and the impending death of someone she loves very much.

Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume

Davey has never felt so alone in her life. Her father is dead—shot in a holdup—and now her mother is moving the family to New Mexico to try to recover. Climbing in the Los Alamos canyon, Davey meets the mysterious Wolf, who can read Davey’s “sad eyes.” Wolf is the only person who seems to understand the rage and fear Davey feels. Slowly, with Wolf’s help, Davey realizes that she must get on with her life. But when will she be ready to leave the past behind and move toward the future? Will she ever stop hurting? (Description from Amazon.com)



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For Teens

***If I Stay* by Gayle Forman**

Seventeen year old Mia wakes in the hospital to realize two things: she was the sole survivor of an accident which claimed the lives of her family, and that she was not quite awake at all. While in a coma, Mia contemplates living her life without her family and processes her grief in a very unique way. Forman's novel of love and loss echoes what many teens (and adults) experience after a death – the question of how to go on living without those who have died.

***You Shouldn't Have to Say Goodbye* by Patricia Hermes**

Hearing the unbearable news that her mother is dying of cancer, thirteen-year-old Sarah Morrow throws herself into her gymnastics and tries to forget the situation until she and her father can come to terms with their impending loss. (Description from Amazon.com)

***Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers : How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love* by Earl Grollman**

If you are a teenager whose friend or relative has died, this book was written for you. Earl A. Grollman, the award-winning author of *Living When a Loved One Has Died*, explains what to expect when you lose someone you love. (Description from Amazon.com)

***Grief Girl: My True Story* by Erin Vincent**

Imagine that you're going through one of the hardest parts of your life—being a teenager—when your parents are killed in a horrific car crash. Now you, your 17-year-old sister, and your three-year-old brother are on your own. (Description from Amazon.com)



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For Teens

***Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt**

Winnie Foster is ten years old when she first meets the mysterious Tuck family. As she builds a friendship with them, she learns their closely-guarded secret; blessed (or cursed) with eternal life, they must wander the country and try to live as inconspicuously as possible. Winnie is then given the choice to have eternal life as well. *Tuck Everlasting* provides thought-provoking reflections on the value of both life and death, and addresses the consequences of eternal life.

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***Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins: A Journal* by Enid Samuel Traisman**

Teens can write letters, copy down meaningful lyrics, write songs and poems, tell the person who died what they want them to know, finish business and use their creativity to work through the grieving process. (Description from Amazon.com)



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For Teens

When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens by Marilyn Grootman

The advice is firm but gentle, non-judgemental and compassionate. The death of a friend is a wrenching event for anyone at any age. Teenagers especially need help coping with this painful loss. This thoughtful and helpful book answers questions grieving teens often have, like "How should I be acting?" "Is it wrong to go to parties and have fun?" and "What if I can't handle my grief on my own?" This book is suitable for ages 11 and up, and for parents and teachers too. (Description from Amazon.com)

Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens by Alan Wolfelt

With sensitivity and insight, this series offers suggestions for healing activities that can help survivors learn to express their grief and mourn naturally. Acknowledging that death is a painful, ongoing part of life, they explain how people need to slow down, turn inward, embrace their feelings of loss, and seek and accept support when a loved one dies. Each book, geared for mourning adults, teens, or children, provides ideas and action-oriented tips that teach the basic principles of grief and healing. These ideas and activities are aimed at reducing the confusion, anxiety, and huge personal void so that the living can begin their lives again. Included in the books for teens and kids are age-appropriate activities that teach younger people that their thoughts are not only normal but necessary. (Description from Amazon.com)



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For Adults

***On Grief and Grieving* by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler**

A pioneer in the field of Death and Dying, Dr. Kübler-Ross Five Stages of Grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) are well-known. Dr. Kübler-Ross and David Kessler delve further into the Five Stages and expand on them, including information on both the internal and external experiences of grief as well as reflections on their own experiences with death, dying, and grief. The authors make an important caveat that the Five Stages are merely a point of reference; no two people grieve the same way, and there is no right or wrong way to feel or to grieve.

***You Can Heal Your Heart: Finding Peace after a Divorce, Breakup, or Death* by David Kessler and Louise Hay**

In *You Can Heal Your Heart*, self-empowerment luminary Louise Hay and renowned grief and loss expert David Kessler have come together to start a conversation on healing after loss. Louise and David discuss the emotions and thoughts that occur when a relationship leaves you brokenhearted, a marriage ends in divorce, or a loved one dies. They will also help you develop greater self-awareness and compassion, providing you with the courage and tools to face many other types of losses and challenges, such as saying good-bye to a beloved pet, losing your job, coming to terms with a life-threatening illness or disease, and much more. (Description from Amazon.com)



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For Adults

***The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion**

A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2005, Joan Didion's seminal work reflects on her experience with grief after the death of her husband in 2003. Didion carefully analyzes her thoughts, emotions, and behaviors during the year following her husband's death and daughter's serious illness, and provides the reader with examples of "magical thinking" often present in grief- believing that if we can just do the right action or utter the right word, our loved ones will return to us.

***Paula* by Isabel Allende**

In December of 1991, Isabel Allende's daughter, Paula, became severely ill and fell into a coma. During the ensuing months in the hospital, Allende began a letter to her daughter explaining her family history, what she was missing while unconscious, and her own thoughts and feelings. What began as a simple letter became a profound reflection on life, loss, and the many kinds of grief – including the slow process of letting go of a terminally ill child.

***Living When a Loved One Has Died* by Earl Grollman**

"A life has ended," begins Rabbi Grollman's unique book on grief, "living goes on." *Living When a Loved One Has Died* is a series of short poems on the multi-faceted experience of grief and is intended to be read in several sittings. With sections such as "Shock," "Suffering," "Recovery," and "A New Life," the reader is invited to choose a section they feel drawn towards and apply the enclosed writings to their own experience.