



*The God Infused
Mindful Grieving Journal*

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**I dedicate this journal
To all those who are healing their grief pain.**

**To the almighty, the truth, the way and the light:
without you I would still be fumbling in the
darkness.**

**To Sergio- in death you showed me what living
means, in life you taught me how to go about it,**

To the loved ones who have gone before us.

**To the professionals having conversations that lead
to compassionate connections.**

**To the support system you know who you are: you
continue to help me be the best me possible.**

**Last but not least, to the beautiful souls who beta
tested this journal. Your entries continue to confirm
that this is an important dialogue. Your gentle
guidance and grace allowed me to edit the contents
accordingly. Your words and sharing are the
ultimate compliment to this work. You remind me
how blessed and privileged I am in doing what I love
and have been called to do. You are my master
teachers.**

With much love,

Diane

The word is laden with stories heavy in grief.

Sometimes grief is in the reflection of the works, gifts and deeds we are part of. Other times grief can be found in the fear, anger and other emotions we feel. For now the type of grief we will focus on is on the loss of life and how that can manifest in your life. We will also focus on grieving a death, the dying process and exploring the mourning and bereavement process as well as giving you prompts to dig deeper as you grow through your grief.

The Bible first speaks of darkness, light, life and death in Genesis. In the very beginning he tells us that he breathed life into us, Genesis 2:7, as we were created in his perfect image, Genesis 1:27. He warned about death, as God commanded Adam in the garden in Genesis 2:17. He then acknowledged that it wasn't good for his creation to be alone, Genesis 2:18, and so he created Eve. That was the first example of community and companionship.

If you are not familiar of the accounts in the book of Genesis, I offer Genesis up like the foundation that it serves for us all in our creation and direction. Reviewing the book affirms that since the beginning, all that we are and all that we have become has been intentional with God and that everything we do and every way we respond in the flesh has been anticipated and even experienced by Jesus our Lord and Savior. In his example we will find grace.

Talking about death is not easy for most people. The education that is received throughout one's lifetime maybe skewed by beliefs, cultures, distorted thinking, irrational notions, faulty media and in ideas of what the perfect death would look like. Society portrays death in movies, shows and media in many different ways, most often not in the most healthy of manners. A common message is that death is to be feared, it is tragic, meaningless and there seems to be no sense of justice, rarely is it portrayed as something beautiful or welcome. When it is, the focus is on martyrdom and it becomes over romanticized. God is the balance in death, dying and bereavement, in our grief, exploring it and understanding it, even when God feels far away and foreign in the experience.

In the grief's honest truth, there are myths we believe. Things like grief has an order to it, it must be gotten over and it should only be experienced for a specific amount of time. We then feed into the beliefs that grieving is a burden, we are doing it wrong, we question ourselves and our grieving process we then inhibit healthy growth usually through isolation and withdraw. These mindsets create an unnecessary amount of stress.

When people die, even the most well-meaning person can say things that are not very helpful. Talking about death is awkward, explaining it is uncomfortable, providing the news to others is unbearable, planning for it is unthinkable and the thought of suffering is unimaginable.

Grieving might be avoidable for a short time, yet not for long because whether we allow it or not, like it or not, or welcome it, grief has a way to work itself into every aspect of the fabric of life.

Unresolved grief is unhealthy as it affects the heart, mind, body and soul of an individual. Grief must be witnessed, that means it needs to be processed, it needs to be tended to. Sometimes that is done with an inner circle. Other times it is done with friends and family. There are even circumstances where grief is processed with strangers, in spiritual settings, support groups and or with professional help. Yet, there may be times that the only witnessing grief is calling to be had is in solitude as you heal your own grieving heart the way it feels right to you just remember to come back into community. Some of Jesus's beautiful examples of grief were when Lazarus and John died, and another can be found in the anticipation of his own death.

If Jesus can bargain with God his father, experience anger and deep sorrow, and question God himself, then don't you think he designed you to be allowed to do the same? It's okay to have questions and be angry with God. He can handle it.

Grief will certainly create an abundance of opportunities to engage in the push and pull of the spirit and the flesh. My hope and prayer for you is that through your own exploration, you can tap into the grace and understanding needed in bringing compassion to what the spirit needs and the answers the flesh desires to heal.

These next few pages are deliberately put together not as a replacement for professional help or for mental health support, rather as an informational and educational foundation on beginning a dialogue about your own grief. It is meant to aid you in prompting thoughts and helping you heal through your own unique understanding. As with anything you are strongly recommended to seek the appropriate guidance in processing grief.

Here is what you can expect to find inside:

- **The vision and mission of my work in Live Life Changed and other grief ministries.**
- **Guidance on the layout and intention for this journal .**
- **The working definitions of terms used.**
- **White space for thought processing.**
- **Bible verses to explore digging deeper in the word by witnessing biblical men and women personified in your own grief growth path.**
- **Journal prompts to help you explore some of your own thoughts, beliefs and practices.**
- **Pages and prompts to record parts of the death story, if you wish.**
- **Reflections, meditations, education and guidance in understanding the grief process.**

The action of completing this journal is in essence exercising the concept of mindful grieving.

Mindful grieving is the intentional choice to gently sitting in your discomfort. Sitting in your discomfort is what you will hear referred to as leaning in. While leaning in you will become aware of thoughts, feelings, reactions and behaviors but instead of responding to these, you take on the role of an observer. Later you will have the opportunity to explore your thoughts, feelings, reactions and behaviors as you experience the detachment to who or what has been lost. This practice will provide insight for understanding your grief, and the grace for your reactions in grief.

Mindful grieving is looking at your grief through a lens of curiosity as you respond to questions which reveal deep-rooted beliefs that impact your well-being. It is an act of reflection and mediation on what thoughts come up, what patterns are revealed, what spiritual conflicts present, how emotions erupt and how all of these manifest in the body. It is the practice of conscious awareness for the present moment without having to respond to the observations of your personal judgments, beliefs and biases.

What mindful grieving is not;

- A practice tied to any particular religion, theological or philosophical model, though they can compliment each other.**
- A cure all for grief.**
- A replacement for professional help.**

Biblical mindfulness is an upward vertical focus on God. It is the awareness of what is going on in the flesh which affects the spirit and how attuning to the spirit heals the flesh. Reflect on Philippians 2:1-3 NIV to understand how to live in awareness.

If these activities are distressing, please honor that and skip it all together until the time that they are not so overwhelming or you can do them with appropriate support.

If you are experiencing a crisis or suicidal thoughts or actions, please seek emergency treatment immediately! Your life matters!

For immediate assistance contact 1-888-Cares-09 (1-888-227- 3709) or call 911 in case of an emergency. Local directories may also be obtained by calling 211, make sure you look up the direct number online if your area code differs from the city you live in.

The grief's honest truth.

Grief is a process that lays the groundwork for becoming everyday a new creation. As with Christ, the old way of living has disappeared and a new way of living has come into existence. In that, we are changed forever.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Let your faith give you wings.

At Live Life Changed the mission is to help the grieving heal their matters of their heart, mind, body and soul as they discover meaningful living despite everyday grieving through grief care, education and advocacy.

The vision is to create a culture where grief care is embraced empathetically and compassionately so that grief illiteracy and avoidance is replaced with compassionate connections that nourish a life in alignment with each individual's authentic wellbeing.

This journal will have specific prompts that will promote and aid you to write from a stream of consciousness allowing you to write whatever comes to mind and following where your thoughts

go. This can help you gain a sense of clarity and help you sort out what you are thinking, feeling, or experiencing in a more creative and tangible way. It's helpful to write without judgement and concerns about grammar or spelling. This is the place that you have permission to write unedited.

The journal has been designed so that you can revisit it at a later date to compare and contrast your areas of growth and resiliency. It can be used as an interactive tool for discussions with a trusted friend, loved one or professional. Within it you will find plenty of white space to take notes, explore your hurts, discover aha moments, practice self-care and rewrite the parts of your grief story that no longer serve you and you wish to change. You will discover that there is no need to hold onto beliefs and practices that no longer grow you or your grief growth path. The grief work will allow you to find your rhythm, create a new relationship with the deceased, move away from death and focus on how your loved one lived and served. The paradigm shift will lead you to a new world perspective, practice depth and authenticity in relationships, find meaning in loss and grief, as well as a new found purpose for life.



Leaning into the the uncertainty of grief.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and
lean not on your own understanding; in all
your ways submit to him, and he will make
your paths straight.**

There are times that talking about death isn't the most challenging part of grief. Just thinking about death can bring forth overwhelming feelings of anxiety, sorrow and upright discomfort. Truth be told to understand grief you actually have to experience grief and do grief work. There are times when people are surprised that even after they have done grief work, and believe that they have processed all that had to be processes about a certain loss, grief can show up again unexpectedly. This is not uncommon and knowing this allows for the experience to be met with more openness and understanding.

My hope is that you work through your grief and that you may ease yourself into the knowing that the discomfort you feel now, will diminish in time. The intensity and duration of grief should not be as it was on the first day. This is not to say that you won't have days where it will feel intense. Know that the memories that once brought you joy, may now bring you sorrow and will once again provide you with a sense of comfort and joy when you are ready and able to let that happen.

In the meantime let's begin with words and definitions that most believe are synonymous with grief.

Working definitions

Grief- deep sorrow. The inward expression of a significant loss, reaction to bereavement and universal response to any loss.

Mourning- the outward expression of deep sorrow related towards a significant loss due to death. Usually a cultural way of expressing grief.

Bereavement - a period of time where one expresses mourning or experiences grief.

Loss-related to no longer having something or someone.

Grief work- the psychological process of coping with significant loss.

Grief print- one's individual application of grief in their physical, emotional, spiritual and social areas of life.

Meaning- an implied or explicit significance towards a concept, action and or words.

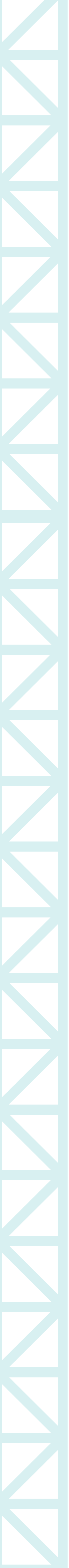
Mindfulness- the ability to be in a state of awareness in the present moment, consciously and aware of things as it happens in the moment. It's the observing of thoughts that flow in and out of the mind without judgment, with gentle acceptance, and acknowledgement of feelings and responses without reactions. A state of heightened mindset.

Mindful grieving- the awareness the flow of grief takes. It is the organic unfolding of the emotions related to loss while practicing gentle exploration without judgment or avoidance. It lays the foundation for inner reflection so that inner wisdom and reconciled hurts, practiced with self-compassion lead to meaningful living for everyday grieving.

Jesus wept for Lazarus.

John 11:32-36 NIV

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”



Please share here what upsets you the most when you think about death.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 30 horizontal black lines, spaced evenly down the page, intended for the user to write their response.

What is the name of the person who died?

When did they die?

What was the cause of death?

How old were they?

Where did they live?

Who were they close to?

What will they be remembered for during their lifetime?

How did you find out they died?

Who was with you?

What were you doing when you got the news?

What upsets you the most when you think about their death?

**Many people don't like the word death, dead or died.
Instead when someone dies they use words like:**

Passed

Passed away

Lost

Six feet under

Crossed over

Left us

No longer with us

Met the maker

Asleep

Expired

Rest in peace

Laid to rest

Gone home

Departed

Gone to heaven

With the angels

Gone

What words have you used to describe death and dying?

Some people don't want to or find it difficult to talk about death, in your opinion what makes it difficult to do this?

Which words would you use to describe how you feel about discussing the death of someone close to you?

Uncomfortable, awkward, frightened, embarrassed, confused, sad, angry, relieved, glad...

What other words come to mind?

Jesus grieved openly for Lazarus with and among those who loved him. He was deeply moved and companioned them in their time of sorrow. He also grieved the death of John in Matthew 14:13-14 NIV though his grief response that time was different.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Grief has no particular way that it wishes or needs to be experienced. Some people don't want to cry because they believe that in doing so they show weakness. Crying however releases toxins from the body and it is not only a very healthy way to cope, it is an innate and natural way of doing things. Throughout the word, water symbolizes purification, tears help cleanse us through our grief. How do you respond when someone cries in front of you?

How was Jesus grief different from that of Lazarus to John?

Name a time when you experienced grief in different ways.

How do you feel when you witness someone crying? Is this the same or different from having your crying witnessed?

People often say they feel like they are going crazy due to the overwhelming amount of emotions.

These emotions can cause confusion and uncertainty.

What you say and how you feel may sound or feel irrational. This can lead to internal conflict and conflicting feelings. Part of being mindful is knowing that these matters are best shared and discussed with people you know and trust.

Describe some of the feelings you are having.

How do you feel about sharing your feelings with friends?

A time for everything.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-12 NIV

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,

a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to kill and a time to heal,

a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh,

a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to

scatter stones and a time to gather them,

a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

a time to search and a time to give up,

a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend,

a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate,

a time for war and a time for peace.

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

All feelings are a natural part and an expected part of grief. Each of the feelings that come up are needed to be honored and expressed. It helps to have a safe place to do this. It also helps to allow your self to experience these.

What feels right for you to do at this time?

Think of two friends you might like to be with or share these feelings.

Ask them if they would be willing to support you anytime of the day or night should you need someone to talk to.

Name two places where you feel safe to be authentically you.

Jesus struggles with the anticipatory grief for what is to come. He understands the importance to retrieve and be alone as he went to Gethsemane. Mark 14:34 NIV

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

Most deaths are hard to accept.

What is it about this death that is hard for you to accept?

Quiet time is important and caution must be exercised not to over do social isolation. Quiet time is an essential part of self-care and even feeling close to the deceased. There will be times where you need to be alone, may crave to be alone and will want to be alone, just remember to make sure you have a balance. When alone time is greater than time you spend with others, then that is when the time spent in isolation would need to be evaluated.

Where is the one favorite place that you can go to be quiet, escape and make time for you?

What kind of thoughts do you have when you are alone?

Judas death by suicide.

Matthew 27:3-5 NIV

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he said, “for I have betrayed innocent blood.” “What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.” So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Death by suicide and unexpected deaths are extremely hard to understand. It is a great loss of life to both family and friends.

Was this death unexpected? How is this true?

Could it have been prevented? What do you base your answer on?

Do you feel in anyway responsible? What makes you feel responsible?

What do you miss the most about the person who died?

Death in old age. Job 5:26 NIV

You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season.

There are times where the death of an elderly person is hard to accept. You may have known them for many years. Acceptance or surrender, while the death was eventually expected, may be difficult to come by. A long-standing illness or a long-lived life does not change that. When the dying process takes years to progress, it is not uncommon to feel a sense of relief because the person died.

Sometimes there is even a sense of contentment. This often brings up emotions of shame and guilt. There may even be some joy in relief. The feelings do not come from their life ending, rather for the ending of their suffering.

What was your relationship to the person who died?

What do you miss the most about your relationship?



Jesus an example of righteous anger.

There were several biblical accounts of Jesus expressing and showing anger. John 2:13-22, Mathew 21:12, 23:1-4.

Anger is a normal and natural reaction that often is looked upon negatively and while I am not encouraging or condoning it, there are times that anger is righteous. Jesus' righteous anger was directed at hypocrisy, greed, lukewarm living, hard heartedness, superiority and pride.

Anger is a common reaction. It is not uncommon for anger to be directed at God or at the person who died. You may feel anger at being left alone. You may be angry as you feel overwhelmed thinking about the tasks that have been left undone. Maybe the deceased hurt you deeply. Some people struggle in knowing how to cope in healthy ways and begin to act out their anger. Often, it may be easier to act out anger destructively or in risky or reckless manner by overeating, getting drunk, taking drugs, having unprotected sex or using sex to numb feelings, destroying property, fighting or perhaps a combination of these behaviors. This behavior is an attempt to avoid or divert attention away from the emotions being experienced.

List two possibly destructive ways you may have used to expressed your anger.

Use this space to list at least three healthy ways in which you can use to express your anger at this time.

You may question why you are angry. Others may question why you are experiencing anger. There are many reasons why the bereft experience anger. Usually there is an underlying cause that fuels the anger. Acknowledging these emotions are just too vulnerable to bring to light. You may have an idea of what is causing this discomfort for you, or this could be a new awakening all together. Some may even ask “why am I so angry?”

Here are some reasons others have shared:

I am angry that I don't have answers.

I am angry that people don't understand.

I am angry that I don't have a choice.

I am angry that I feel alone,

I am angry that I have learned unexpected things.

What other reasons bring up feelings of anger? Share them here.

Death anxiety and fear. Psalm 55:4 NIV

My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me.

Death can also bring forth fear and anxiety. This can happen at the thought of the death of others, especially those you are close to or love. This is a normal and natural grief reaction. The realization that we can experience death at any time makes one feel vulnerable to death.

What fears do you have about death? Rate those fears on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being “not afraid” and 10 being “really afraid.”

What worries do you have about death?

Other things you may fear.

What comes to mind when thinking of death and dying? Circle any that resonate with you.

Pain

Loosing the ability to use your mind

Leaving loved ones behind

Leaving friends behind

Leaving pets behind

Cremation

Being buried

No more good times

Dying alone

Hurting your family

The after life

The unknown

Isaiah's expressions of guilt. Isaiah 6:5

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

It is not uncommon to feel guilt among the emotions with grief. Guilt is another feeling that often comes up when someone you know dies. You may feel guilty that you are still alive. You may feel guilty about something that was said.

Some thoughts that can cause a sense of guilt are:

I should have been nicer to them.

I did something that caused them to die.

I could have saved him.

Do you feel guilty about this death?

What thoughts contribute to this feeling?

Guilt is what we feel when we believe we have committed a specific or implied offense. Shame is the vulnerability or humiliation of knowing about the action that created the guilt. Forgiveness allows for those two feelings to be acknowledged and perhaps let go and reconciled. 1 John 1:9 NIV If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What do you want to forgive yourself?

What could you forgive yourself for?

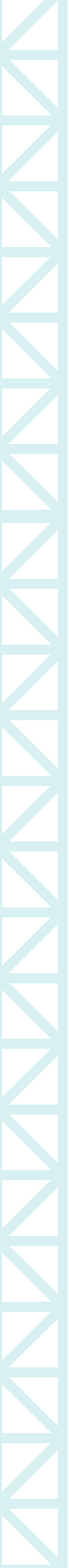
What do you need to forgive yourself for?



Self reflection.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.



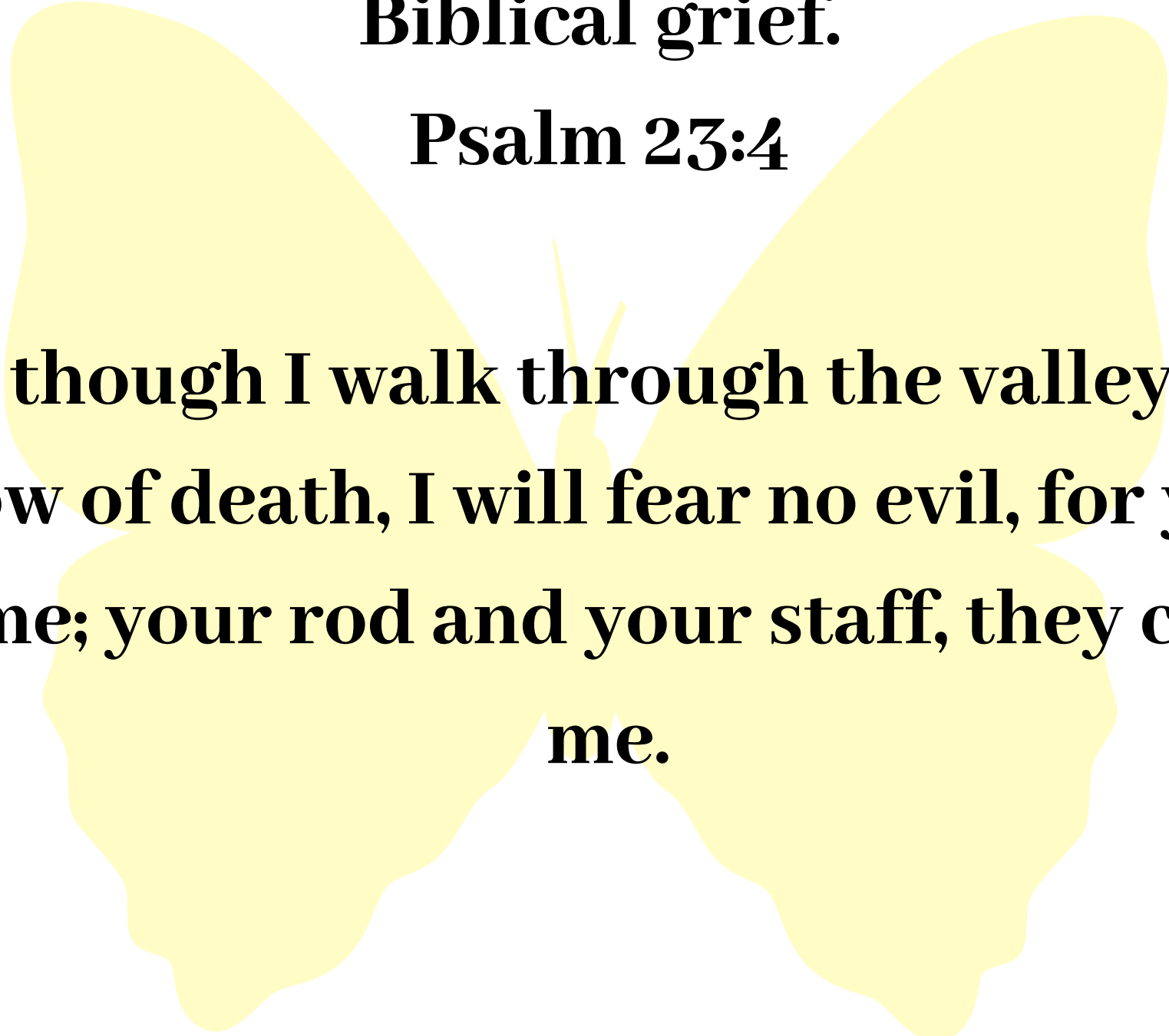
While grieving, it helps to look back at things that were meaningful to you. Things that brought you comfort, a sense of belonging, a sense of being. Maybe it was a yearly tradition or a morning ritual. Perhaps it was a weekend activity. Some have even enjoyed using their time, talents and gifts to help and serve others in memory of the one they have lost.

What rituals, traditions, etc., connect you to your lost loved one?



Biblical grief.

Psalm 23:4



Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Grieving is normal and healthy. Grief may bring challenges in many ways. You may have difficulty sleeping and may experience depressive feelings or become depressed. Some people experience difficulty sleeping and may experience depressive feelings or become depressed. Some people experience difficulty at work, school and other social environments. Food may lose its appeal or may not even taste right or good. There may be repeating thoughts that continue for months, These changes may be really challenging to work through alone, It is hard to experience grief alone and asking for help may be hard.

Do you feel it is okay to ask for help?

Where could you go to find help?

Who would you ask for help?

If you could describe or define grief, and share your experience with it, what would you say about the following?

Mostly I feel

Sometimes I feel

My body feels

I have dreams about

It is hard for me to

School/work is/are

The worst thing is

I am mad that

I am sad that

I feel sorry that

I worry about

It would help if

I think about death when

I wish

Other people sometimes

The best thing is



It helps when

If I could change one thing it would be

Strength and courage. Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Sometimes people tell us how strong we are, while others tell us to be strong. Perhaps your belief is that you must be strong and that you must demonstrate how strong and brave you are. As a gentle reminder though, be kind to yourself. This period of your life is not the time to introduce more stress; believing and performing to show how strong you are, creating an illusion of strength is stressful. It is unrealistic. Strength does not come from what you or others perceive that you can or should handle. Strength is knowing and understanding your limits, and how to take care of yourself while respecting your basic human needs. Basic needs are often forgotten and easily neglected during grief. It is important to not only eat well, but also get plenty of sleep and exercise while being compassionate, gentle and kind to your self.

List two unhealthy behaviors that can hurt you.

List three healthy things you can do to help you cope in a positive way with your feelings.

Biblical rituals and customs for the dead.

Acts 9:37 NIV

About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

Rituals like funerals and memorial services provide an opportunity to honor the deceased. It is an opportunity to give or to receive support from family, friends and others.

The viewing of the body is a personal choice; some feel compelled to see the deceased to help them in accepting the death. Religious beliefs, ethnic or cultural customs may also dictate or guide certain ceremonies, rituals or customs.

Did you or will you go to the funeral?

What are your beliefs about cremation?

How do you feel about a burial?

Some people believe in God and heaven, others in a Divine, in a unity or universal consciousness. Yet others may believe that death is finite and nothing happens or lies afterwards. Sometimes this becomes a period of deep questioning for some Christians.

What do you believe happens after death?

The presence of Jesus.

John 20:15 NIV

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Have you ever felt the presence of the person who died or heard their voice?

How was that for you?

Some would define spirituality as having to do with a religious belief, a sensitivity to values or an attachment to beliefs. It may be the quality or the state of operating a belief that there is something bigger than oneself. Nothing says that spirituality is exclusive to theology or philosophy. Take a moment and think about what spirituality means for you.

If you wanted or needed spiritual support, where could you look for it?



Thoughts

In ways beyond our understanding, loved ones are always with us in one-way or another. Their legacy lives on through the things they have done, the people they touched, the children they raised, the works they did, through the friendships they had and in the acts of love, help, etc., they may have done for others. Another way they live on is through our memories.

What do you miss the most about the person who died?

What one good thing stands out for you the most that they did during their lifetime?

Take the time to write down some special memories that you wouldn't want to forget below.

Sometimes there are memories that are best left to explore at another time. Pick one and write a memory jogger here to explore later in your grief.

Things better left unsaid.

Proverbs 21:23 NIV

Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

There may have been some things left unsaid. You may not have been able to say what you wanted to say or you may not have had a chance to say. Below are some prompts that can help in writing a letter to express the things you would have wanted to say but didn't.

I remember

I felt

You were

It would have been great

I need to

I wish


It was fun when

I am sorry for

I miss

I loved

Thank you for



Death is perpetual; many have gone before us. Our ancestors not only lead the way for our existence, they hold a special part in history. They also play an important part in who we are and who we have become. Take the time to honor some of them and list the names of those that you know.


Write your relationship next to each name. If you don't know their name just write their relation, If you were adopted or if you don't know, its okay to give them a name.



Healing with Jesus.

Matthew 5:4 NIV

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be
comforted.**



Part of creative healing and expression is to be able to express yourself in other mediums. This is especially helpful when words fail you or when the desire to talk is diminished. A gentle reminder, if these activities are distressing, please honor that and skip it all together until the time that they are not so overwhelming or you can do them with professional help.

Take the time to draw a picture of your feelings, of life or of how you see the world.

Another way to express your grief is through writing; it's not uncommon for the bereft to write poems. Perhaps you have a poem in you that wants to be written.

Another helpful source of stress relief and mourning is through the use of music. Some songs may make you sad, help you cry, may bring joy, conjure good memories and may even make you want to get up and dance.

Take the time in the next few pages to draw, write, and recite favorite or meaningful poems and to create a play list of music to suit your needs for healing.



My feelings look like this

My feelings look like this



My life looks like this

My life looks like this



Death looks like



Life looks like



I see the world like this

The poem that is calling to be written goes as follows

Handwriting practice area with 25 horizontal lines.

Some people love to watch movies. Reminiscing may be a welcome distraction and movies may help with the feeling of melancholy. Some movies can hit a nerve and allow for grief to be processed through the similarity of what is being presented on the screen.

Create an initial play list of feel good movies, comedy, nostalgia, etc.

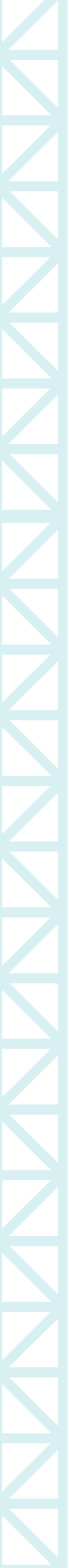
In the following pages break this list into groups which are characterized by similarities in form, style and subject matter (genre).



Protect your heart.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

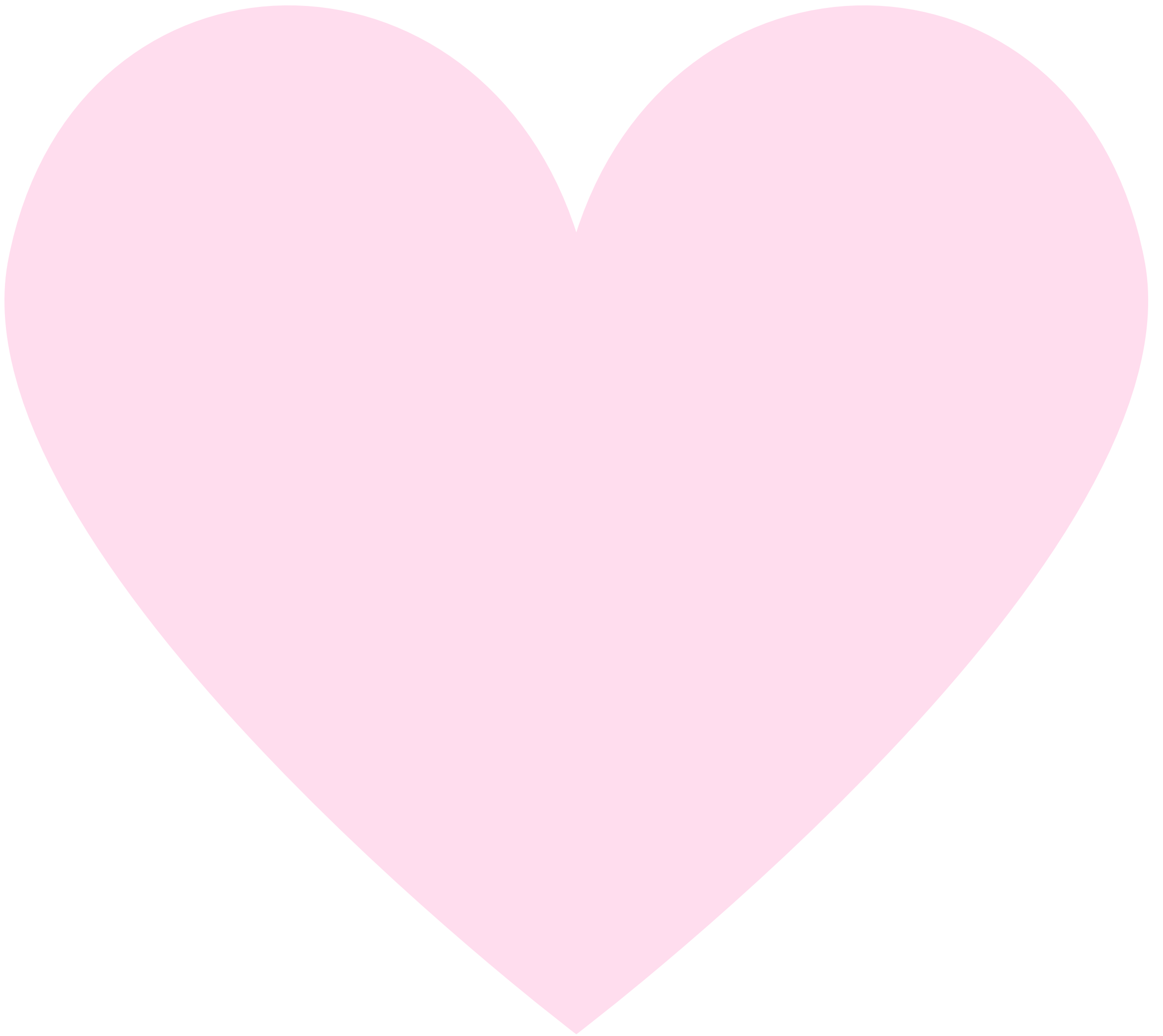
**Above all else, guard your heart, for everything
you do flows from it.**



Some of the most significant, stressful and pain filled moments in life will have to do with grief. The work cannot be hurried. The death of a loved one is one of the most stressful life transitions one can experience. Emotions affect all aspects of our being. Sooner or later you will begin to feel and hurt. What is happening is a normal and natural process.

Emotional release comes from the heart. It is often referred to as heart centered work. It involves love and compassion and calls for you to share your “true” self. It is fueled by your wisdom, your discernment, your intellect, your intuition and your instinct. Emotional release may include messages you are receiving from your body. It happens when you are able to share your feelings.

Show how you believe grief is felt in the heart.



Grief shows up in my heart like this (put an x and or draw where it shows up).



Use this heart to identify the things you would like to keep in your heart and those things you would like to let go. The items you wish to release can be placed anywhere outside of this heart. The items you treasure can be safely tucked inside.

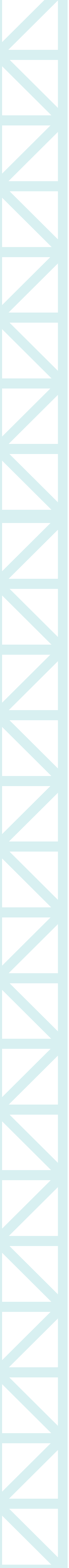




Working through obsession.

Romans 8:6

**The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the
mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.**



Despite the best intentions and one's best efforts, you may find it increasingly difficult not to be preoccupied with the deceased. These incessant thoughts are called rumination. For some it may even equate to an obsessive behavior.

Many have reported that the thoughts are more prevalent in the evening and usually just before they turn into bed. In the evening we are not as distracted or busy with the day's activities.

Often the bereft experience recurring dreams. Recurring dreams are experienced during times of stress or change. This is the time your brain is trying to process and work something out as you rest. You may be wishing for a different outcome to your recent loss. You may be seeking to understand the loss or searching for meaning. These dreams will likely resolve as your grief experience changes and as you adapt

Show how you believe grief appears in the mind.



Grief shows up in my mind this way.



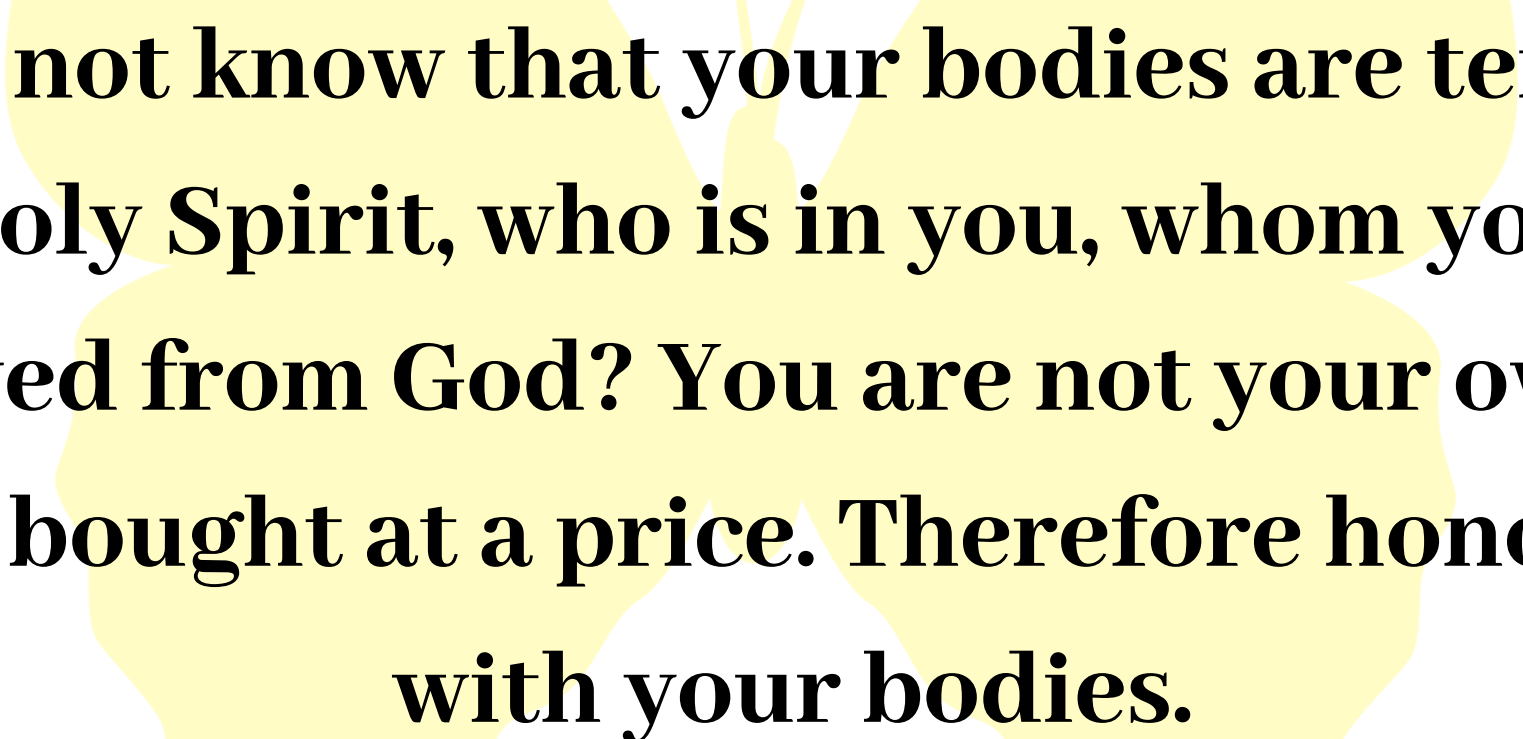
There are thoughts that can cause great distress. Identify the thoughts you would like to keep and those you would like to let go, Unhealthy thoughts may be placed anywhere on the outside of the mind. Healthy adaptive thoughts can be safely stored inside.





Honor your body.

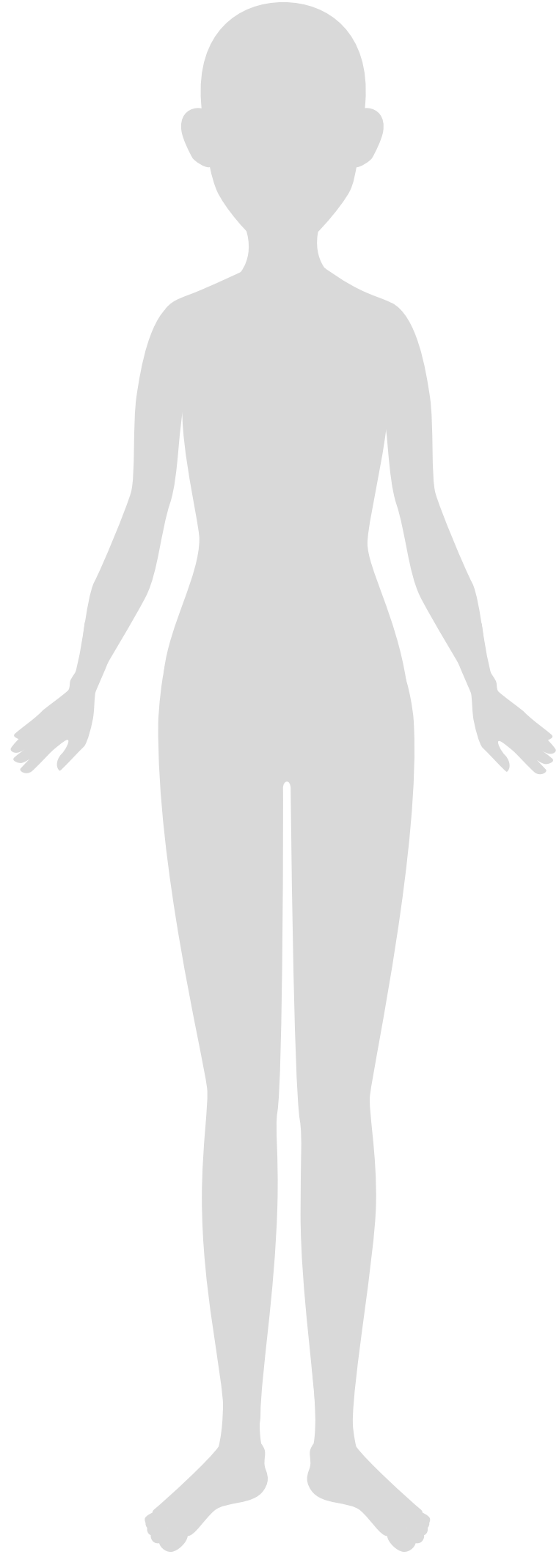
1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV



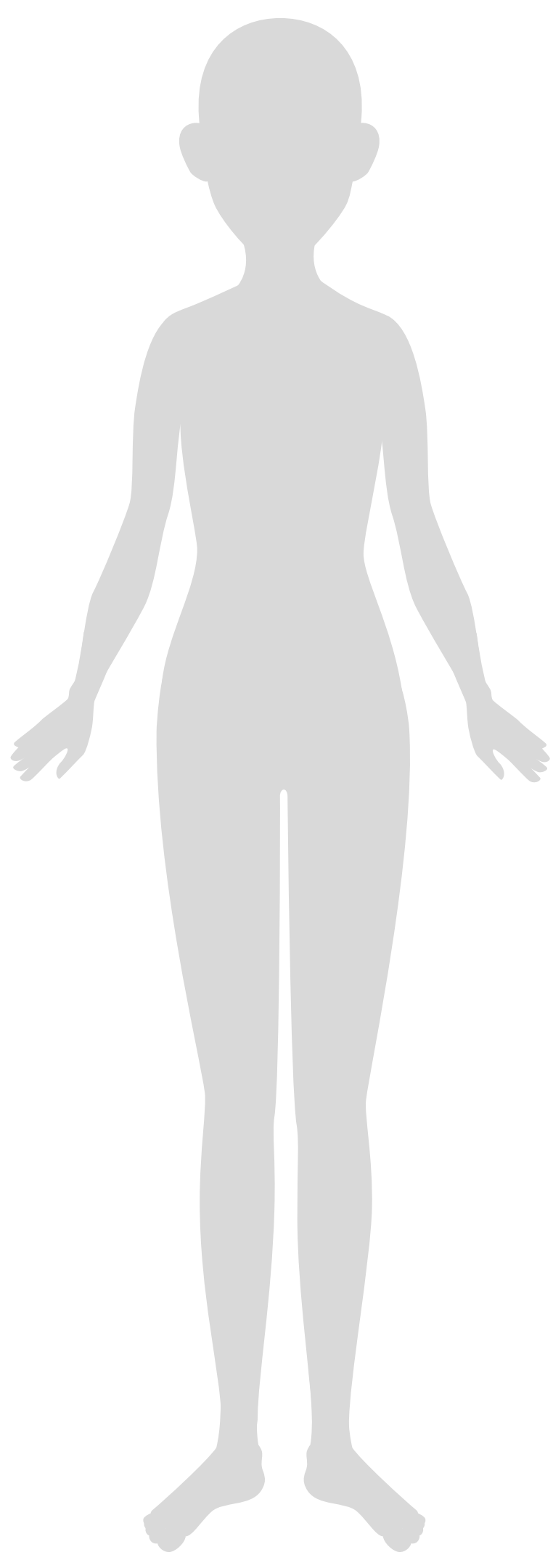
Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Some symptoms of physical distress are to be expected. These symptoms may come in waves and can be felt in different areas of the body. It is a physical reaction to how you feel and think. Good nutrition, adequate sleep, and physical exercise help aid in minimizing grief's presentation in the body. It helps to get regular check up to rule out any health concerns and will help you focus on how to heal your body from grief.

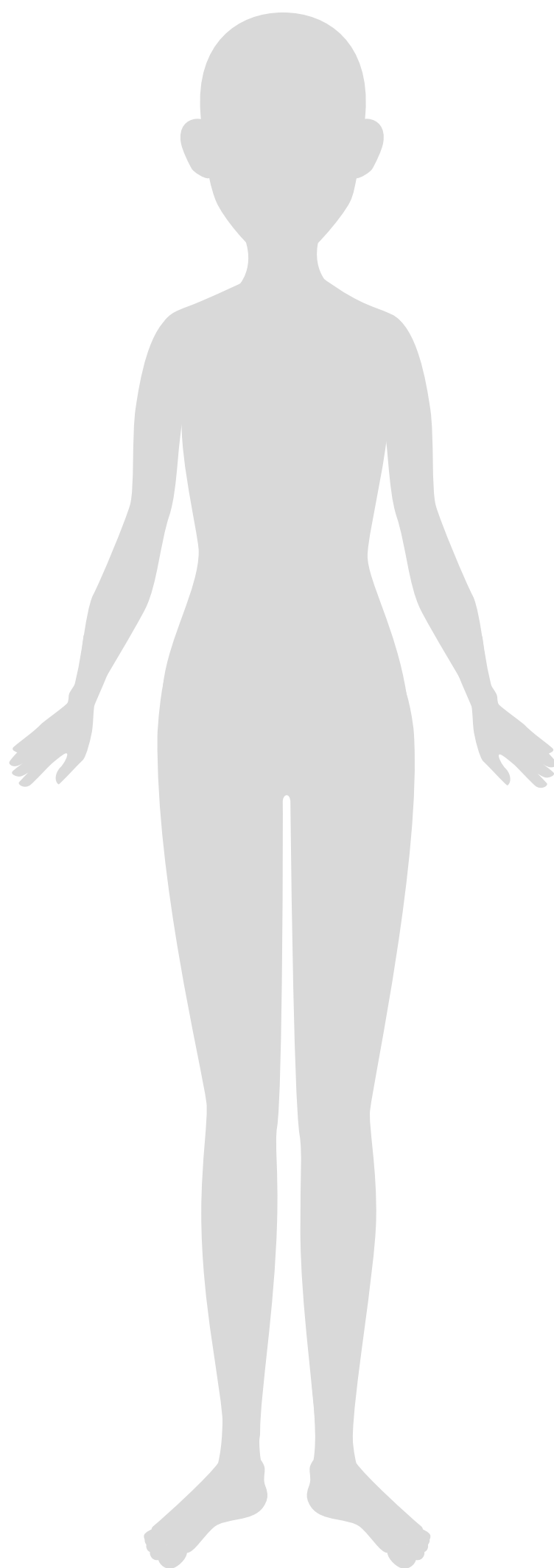
Show how you believe grief presents in the body.



Grief shows up in my body here (put an x where it shows up).



Identify the parts of your body that need special attention. Place them into two categories. Those things that are internal in nature go inside the body. Those things that are felt externally should be placed on the outside of the body, Brainstorm ways you can address each with some self-care.





Protect your ways.

Proverbs 4:26

**Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.**

Often what we think places a heavy burden on our soul.

The internal struggle is something that as we suffer, can begin the groundwork to crush our spirit, if we let it. Long held negative beliefs are easily reinforced by our external world, with the messages we receive from well meaning people and society. Some of these messages are that happiness, joy and contentment are achieved by looking outside of our selves. Am I doing it right, what would you do, how did they do that, who would approve, if it just...

When the external world doesn't validate our needs or acknowledge our struggles, then our own understanding suffers as well.

Our insistent manner of not looking with in, makes inner peace an illusive idea, if we dare to even contemplate the idea of leaning on our own understanding for happiness, joy, contentment or inner peace.

Emotional distress hinders our growth in finding meaning in the day to day of life and feeling connected on a higher vibrational level.

Show how you believe grief is felt in the soul.



Grief shows up in my spirit in this way.



There are things that weigh heavy on our soul. Place the things that burden your soul outside in the white space. Place things that cultivate love, compassion, empathy and a sense of well-being inside.



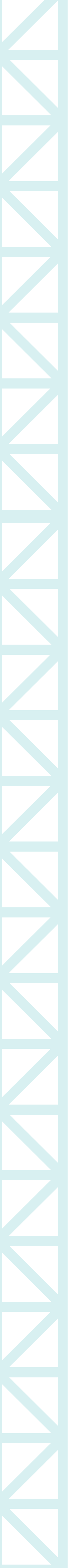


Thoughts pleasing unto God.

Psalm 19:14

**May these words of my mouth and this
meditation of my heart be pleasing in your
sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Until now, things that I had not thought about.



How can you incorporate what you need as a regular practice?

My handsome little prince

**While everyone pondered
How sad it would be without you,**

**While everyone wondered
How sad we would be,**

**The priest blessed your casket
And the butterflies came.**

**One white and one yellow,
Quickly flying in and out.**

**Through the crowd they flew all about.
Before they left,**

Your casket they gently kissed.

Not everyone saw them

**Only a chosen few, but for those who did
We felt it was you.**

The colors they wore

**To me can be interpreted
As purity and light.**

**Some say they were angels,
I believe that too...**

**I believe one was your guardian angel
And the other one was you.**

**You were there to see how loved you were
And to let us know you were okay**

**Thank you Sergio honey,
You really made our day.**

Kiss Kiss Hug Hug, Love Mommy

Diane Diaz Rodriguez



Diane is a registered mental health counselor intern in Florida, with a passion for grief education, She was born into this world for healing grief. Entering the world as a rainbow baby, before the age of eighteen she had experienced so much loss that she thought she knew everything there was about the grieving process. That was until her only son died at the age of eleven. Through the tender months and years that followed her greatest loss, she encountered some professionals who were supportive and sadly many who were not. She became an expert in her own grief, consuming all that she could on death, dying and bereavement. Her hope is that the lessons she learned and the pain she experienced, would not be in vain. Determined to help and educate others in a society where death, dying and bereavement is still challenged with honest, compassionate and understanding conversations, she made a career change. Her drive was propelled by her volunteer work in the field of death, dying and bereavement, and her life long love of people. She is a grief educator, bereavement coach, consultant, speaker, writer and therapist. Her life's desire is to help people heal their matters of their heart, mind, body and soul as they mindfully recover through grief.

Giving of her time and talents, other love offerings for the near future will include:

**Dying for meaning, mindful grieving-
an e-course in understanding the healthy grief process as
one learns to find meaningful living through everyday
grieving.**

**Dying for Meaning-
A podcast and book series in meaningful living.**

**A Year in Grief Planner-
A yearly planner to help prepare for grief milestones.**

**Connecting Compassion-
A monthly coaching membership that includes monthly
self-care kits, one on one support and access to
membership exclusives.**

**Getting to goodbye, returning to hello-
An annual retreat to reconnect, recreate and revision the
world of grief.**

**Love offerings currently available-
Bereavement Coaching
Consultations for Professionals
Know Pain, Know Grief Workshop
Live Life Changed Facebook Community
A Mindful Grieving Journal**

**Diane Diaz (Rodriguez), MSCP, CAC,
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