

The background of the slide is a dark, starry night sky. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a person sitting in a meditative pose on a hill. To the left of the person is a large, spreading tree. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

The Healthy Way To Navigate Grief

Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT

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Author, *Mindfulness & Grief* and *From Grief To Peace*

D.O. McComb & Sons & Dignity Memorial

Annual Grief Seminar

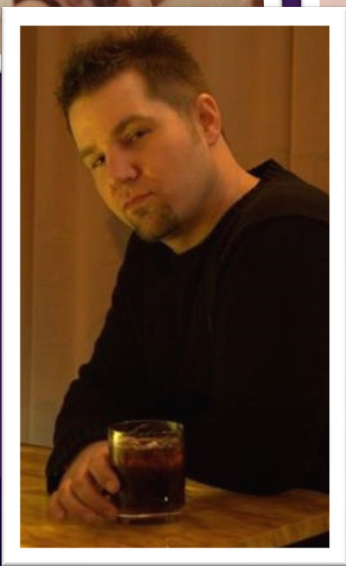
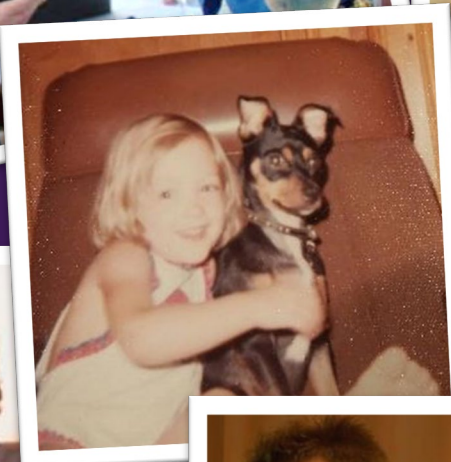
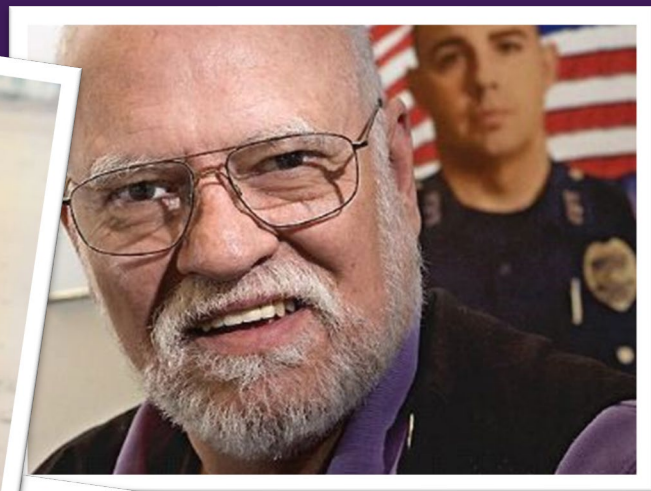
May 2, 2023

My invitation to you...



- ♥ Show up as you are
- ♥ Take away what resonates
- ♥ Release what does not
- ♥ Acknowledge our similarities
- ♥ Honor our differences
- ♥ Always put your needs first
- ♥ Invite your loved ones in







The Mindfulness & Grief System

- Compassionate Awareness
- Mindfulness for Grief
- Compassion for All
- Skilful Courage
- Letting Go with Ease
- Meaning Reconstruction
- Altering Transformation
- Perpetual Mindfulness

Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT
MindfulnessAndGrief.com

The Mindfulness & Grief System



Conscious Relaxation

Self-care for Your Grieving Body



Mindfulness For Grief

Finding Peace in the Present Moment



Compassion For All

Care for Yourself & Others



Skillful Courage

Harness Your Strength & Vulnerability



Getting Unstuck

The Space You Need to Move Forward



Meaning Reconstruction

Cherish The Love That Remains



Allowing Transformation

Discover Your Authentic Self



Perpetual Mindfulness

A Healthy Lifestyle for Grief & Beyond





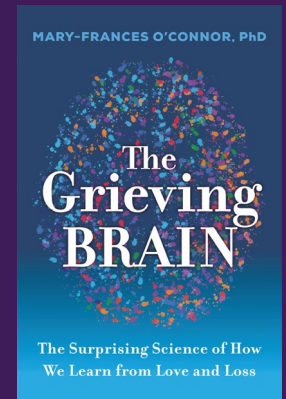
- ♥ Physical
- ♥ Emotional
- ♥ Psychological
- ♥ Spiritual
- ♥ Behavior
- ♥ Relationships
- ♥ Finances



“Grief is a heart-wrenchingly painful problem for the brain to solve, and grieving necessitates learning to live in the world with the absence of someone you love deeply, who is ingrained in your understanding of the world.”

Mary-Frances O’Connor

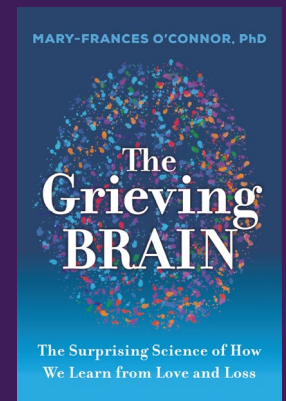
The Grieving Brain: The Surprising Science of How We Learn From Love and Loss

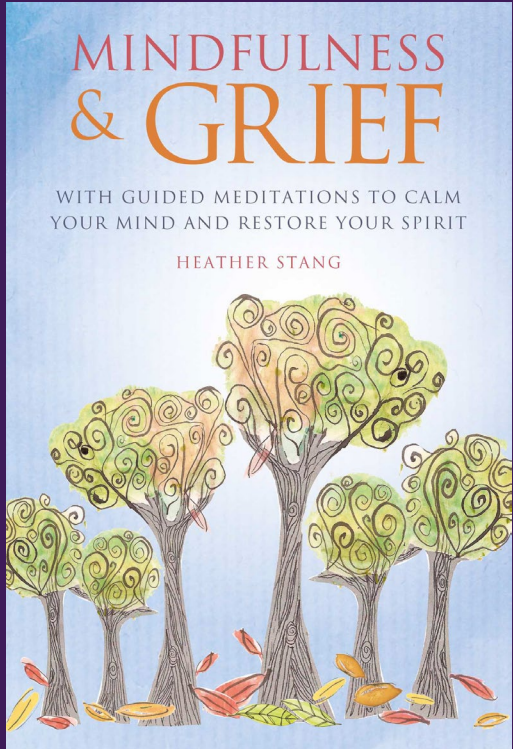


“Adopting the mindset that grieving is a form of learning, and that we are always learning, may make the winding path of grief more familiar and hopeful.”

Mary-Frances O'Connor

The Grieving Brain: The Surprising Science of How We Learn From Love and Loss





“Rather than turn our back on our own suffering, we treat ourselves as we would a beloved friend. We take the time to pay attention to the physical sensations, thoughts, and feelings that accompany our pain.”

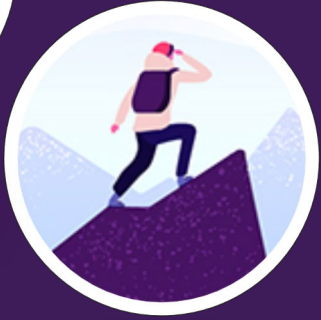
From Mindfulness & Grief (p. 15)





**Grief is not something you fix.
It is something you learn how to do.**





Grieving in a healthy way combines coping skills and self-care practices to reduce your suffering and improve wellbeing based on your individual needs.





**Your grief is as unique
as the relationship
between you and your
loved one.**

**So what you need may
be different from even
those closest to you.**





**Coping skills reduce
psychological distress.**



3 Elements Of An Emotion

1. Subjective Experience
2. Physiological Response
3. Behavioral Response

PERIODIC TABLE OF HUMAN EMOTIONS

LO LOVE													FE FEAR	
EM EMPATHY													NE NERVOUSNESS	DR DREAD
SE SERENITY	TE TENDERNESS	JO JOY	HO HOPE	SU SURPRISE	IT INTEREST	BM BAD MOOD	RB REBELLION	SA SADNESS	BO BOREDOM	SH SHY	IN INSECURITY	SS STRESS		
CO COMPASSION	SY SYMPATHY	ST SATISFACTION	PL PLEASURE	EC ECSTASY	AN ANGER	RE RESENTMENT	HS HOSTILITY	LN LONELINESS	AB ABANDONMENT	CF CONFUSION	SP SUSPICION	SB SUBMISSION		
GR GRATITUDE	TS TRUSTFULNESS	EN ENTHUSIASM	EA EASE	OP OPTIMISM	HT HATE	FR FRUSTRATION	IC INCOMPREHENSION	DC DISCOURAGEMENT	NO NOSTALGIA	TR TERROR	SM SHAME	DI DISGUST		
AD ADMIRATION	PR PRIDE	EU EUPHORIA	DE DESIRE	HA HAPPINESS	RA RAGE	JE JEALOUSY	EV ENVY	AR ARROGANCY	BL BLAME	RS RESIGNATION	ME MELANCHOLIA	CT CONTEMPT		
									DS DISAPPOINTMENT	WE WEARINESS	PE PESSIMISM			

★ BASIC EMOTIONS

- ♥ LOVE
- ☀ JOY
- ! SURPRISE
- 🔥 ANGER

- 💧 SADNESS
- 🦋 FEAR
- 🍃 DISGUST





Respond to unexpected waves

- ♥ Accept that you may will get tipped over
- ♥ Designate a physical safe space
- ♥ Know what you can control and what you can't
- ♥ Know your triggers so you can anticipate them
- ♥ Keep track of what helps and do more of that
- ♥ Know who you need (people, pets)
- ♥ Know what you need (music, blankets, chocolate)





A Grief Coping Box Can Help You:

- ♥ Identify and express thoughts.
- ♥ Comfort you.
- ♥ Provide positive distraction.
- ♥ Fuel your sense of hope, motivation and perseverance.
- ♥ Shift your mindset from worrying and overanalyzing to a problem-solving mentality.

<https://thehealthsessions.com/coping-box/>



Quick Fix: Tune In To Your Senses

- ♥ Sight: Picture of beach
- ♥ Sound: Grief playlist
- ♥ Taste: Peppermint tea
- ♥ Touch: Soft blanket
- ♥ Smell: Essential oils



Support System Superlatives

Take a tip from your high school year book and assign support superlatives to your friends and family. Determine what you need help with and then decide who's 'most likely' to provide the best assistance. Don't worry about hurt feelings, these are for your eyes only. Here are a few examples...


1. Most likely to help me pack my loved one's things
2. Most likely to watch my children.
3. Most likely to take a day or weekend trip with me
4. Best listener.
5. Best advice giver.
6. Most likely to not pass judgement.
7. Most understanding.
8. Most likely to help me organize my finances.
9. Most likely to let me sleep on their couch.
10. Most likely to quickly respond in an emergency.
11. Most rational.
12. Most likely to make me laugh.
13. Most likely to help me with home repairs.
14. Most likely to carpool to and from my child's school and other activities.
15. Most likely to talk with me about my loved one.
16. Most likely to volunteer with me or help me fight a cause in my loved ones honor.
17. Most likely to celebrate my loved ones birthday with me.
18. Most likely to tell me truth.
19. Most likely to notice I'm having a hard time.
20. Most likely to answer the phone at 1 am.
21. Most likely to spend the holidays with me or invite me to spend the holiday with them.
22. Most likely to motivate me.
23. Most likely to exercise with me.
24. Most likely to give me good advice on my opposite sex children.
25. Most likely to still be supportive a year from now

“Let me know if there’s anything I can do.”

1. Be more open to asking for help
2. Identify your needs
3. Identify the best person to help

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/support-system-superlatives-a-journaling-exercise/>





R.A.I.N.: Working With Difficult Emotions

- **RECOGNIZE** - Acknowledge what you are feeling. What is happening inside me right now?
- **ALLOWING (Acceptance)** - Be willing to be present to your experience, no matter how unpleasant. Whatever you notice, let it be. (Tara Brach recommends noting “I consent” or “yes” or “this too”).
- **INVESTIGATE** - Unhook yourself from the object or story, so you can witness the embodied emotion with kindness, and from an unbiased perspective.
- **NURTURE** – Offer yourself mercy and care as you would an ideal best friend. Words of kindness, a gentle caress, or an acknowledgement of how hard this is are a few ways to practice.

(Brach, 2020)



Self-Compassion Mantra

Imagine the most compassionate and understanding person you can - real or imagined. As you reflect on these questions, conjure of a feeling of being comforted and seen by this being.

- ♥ What would they say to you or do to show they understand your pain?
- ♥ How would they remind you that you are not flawed for having these feelings, you are just a human being doing the best you can given the circumstances you are in - many of which are out of your control?

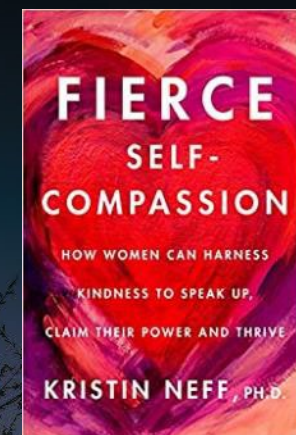
Finally, write down a sentence or two that you will say to yourself next time you feel self-critical in the box above, and place it somewhere that you will see it regularly. Memorize your self-compassion mantra and say it to yourself whenever you catch yourself in a cycle of self-criticism.



Self-care activities
increase your resilience.



Healthy Motivation & The Three Components of Self-Compassion



1. Kindness manifests as encouragement
2. Common humanity provides wisdom
3. Mindfulness gives vision and clarity



Befriend your body



- ♥ Schedule a check-up with your healthcare provider
- ♥ Pay attention to physical sensations
- ♥ Receive bodywork: massage, reiki, yoga therapy, etc.



Good Sleep Hygiene

- ♥ Stick to a sleep schedule
- ♥ Move your body for 30 minutes a day
- ♥ Limit caffeine and alcohol
- ♥ Create a sleep sanctuary
- ♥ Manage lighting & devices
- ♥ Have a bedtime relaxation ritual



Build Resilience Into Your Life

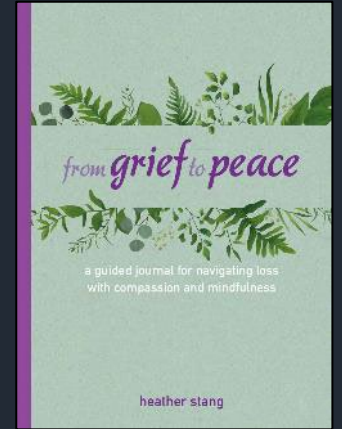
- ♥ The givens: sleep, nutrition, hydration, movement
- ♥ Schedule time to enjoy the people and animals around you
- ♥ Schedule alone time doing something pleasurable and/or creative
- ♥ Plan regular daily, weekly, & monthly self-care activities that you enjoy
- ♥ Know your “go-to” coping skills and practice as often as needed





Journaling for grief can help you release pent up feelings, process emotions, discover insights, and record your experiences.



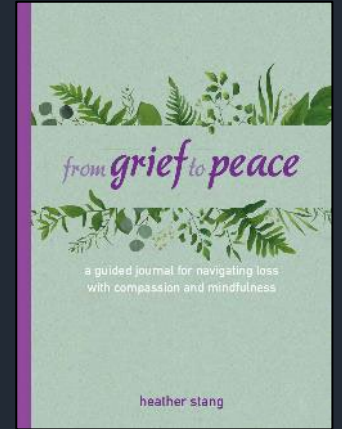


Nurture the Love That Remains

“Journaling for me consists of a continuing letter to my departed wife about what I'm doing and thinking. One might consider this a one-way conversation, but after 63 years of marriage, I can hear her responding to my musings. So she is still helping me stay grounded, centered, and patient as I deal with my grief and move to my new normal.”



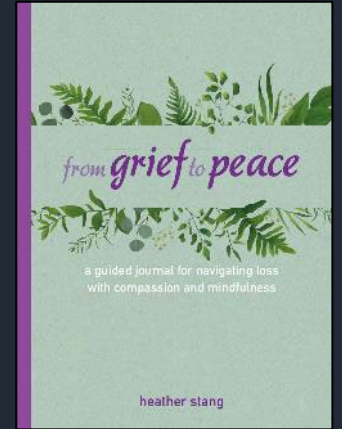
Become Your Own Best Friend



“I turned to journaling right away after the sudden loss of my husband. It helped me feel and share the unimaginable pain that instantly dominated my life. I am learning you have to feel the pain of loss before you can get through it. And journaling allows me to share my thoughts, emotions, and grief with someone I could trust. Myself. It helped me to trust myself.”



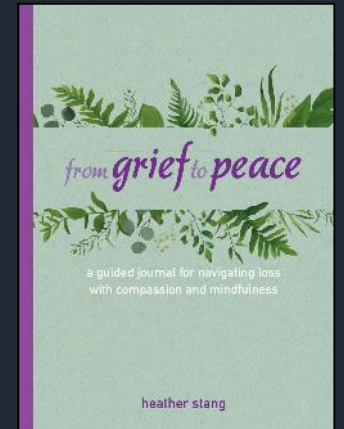
See How Far You've Come



“When I read back through my journal, I am witnessing my past through the lens of the present. I feel so much tenderness for myself – what I have been through is hard and it hurts. Sometimes I cry. But I also feel proud of myself for sticking with it, for being afraid and showing up anyway. It amazes me what I have been able to get through. I know my husband is as proud of me as I was of him.”



Savor & Share The Memories

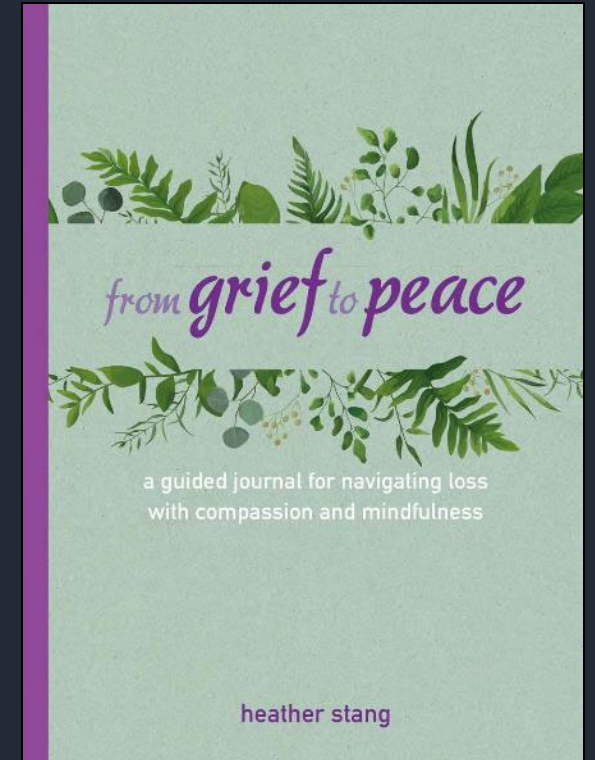


“I keep a journal primarily to communicate with my daughter, Khloey, who was only two and a half when her father, Mike, died. Writing down answers to her questions and memories helps me know what I want to share. The other day I asked her if she remembered him, and, of course, she said ‘no.’ I told her, “Well, you are going to remember him through me. What I write, the pictures, photos, his best friends telling stories—that is how you are going to know who he is. You will know that he loved you.”



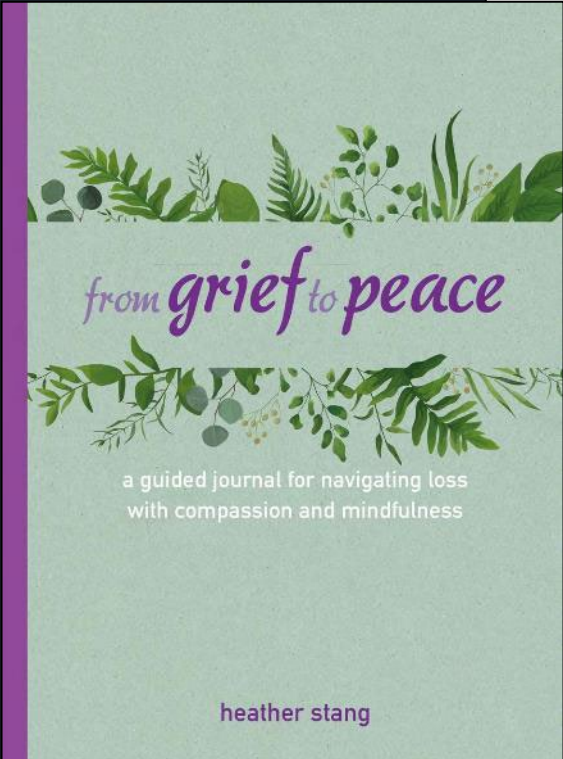
From Grief To Peace Journaling Tips

- ♥ There are no right or wrong answers
- ♥ Mindfully engage with your whole being
- ♥ Approach familiar subjects as if it were the first time
- ♥ Walk up to the edge, but don't fall over
- ♥ Seek out physical and emotional support as needed
- ♥ If you are using a guided journal, go through in order — or don't
- ♥ Bonus Tip: Make it a habit by linking it to a regular activity

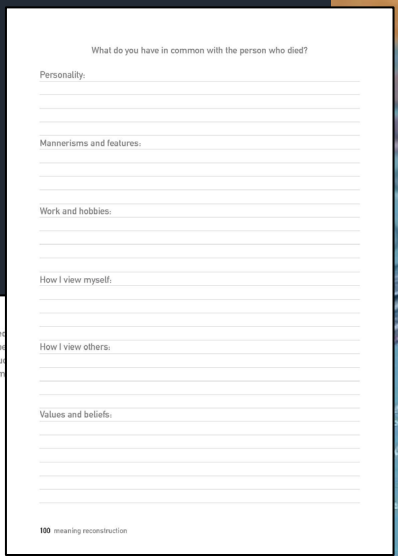


From Grief To Peace (Stang, 2021)





From Grief To Peace
(Stang, 2021)





Continuing Bonds

- ♥ Daily Rituals
- ♥ Life Imprint Meditation
- ♥ Planning for Special Days
- ♥ Say Their Name



THERE ARE NO PASSIVE STAGES OF GRIEF.

There are things you can do
that move you forward.

AWAKEN



TIME DOES NOT HEAL ALL WOUNDS.

It is what you do with
your time that matters.

AWAKEN



TOXIC POSITIVITY HELPS NO ONE.

Compassion is the
greatest healer of all.

AWAKEN



TALKING ABOUT THEM DOESN'T
MAKE GRIEF WORSE.

It fosters a healthy continuing bond.

AWAKEN



YOU DON'T NEED TO BE STRONG.

Self-compassion will balance your
courage and vulnerability

AWAKEN



YOU DON'T NEED TO GET OVER IT.

You'll learn how to live your life
in a meaningful way.

AWAKEN



SHAMELESS [BUT HELPFUL] SELF-PROMOTION

Please consider joining me in Awaken...
plus check out my books and aromatherapy diffusers.
Stay in touch. Have hope.

AWAKEN

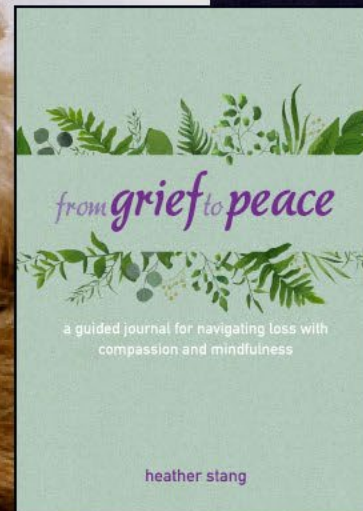
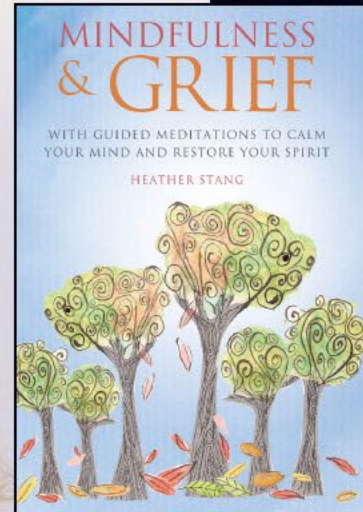




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