

HOPE & HEALING



Gentle Daily Meditations
On Grief and Loss

Finding Relief on the Road Well Traveled...
One Day at a Time





JANUARY 1

New Beginnings

Yes, today is the start of a new year. More important, it's the start of a new day. And the best news of all is that every day is the start of a new day.

In the depths of my grief, every day was interminable. No matter the tasks I had to perform or the things I wanted to do, my loss consumed my thoughts as I did them. If I could do them. Minutes felt like hours. The clock seemed to run backwards. Making it through a single day only meant that I was doomed to the same soul-crushing, all-consuming thoughts again the next. I dreaded waking up knowing that today would just be another sad day like yesterday. And the day before that. And the day before that. I'd been sad for so long that I couldn't remember what it felt like not to be burdened by sadness. In working through my grief, I recognize that while my loss can never be replaced, my future is filled with more positive things than I can even imagine. And that every day is filled with possibilities for me to discover these new and wonderful things. Because of my healing work, I now live more in possibilities and opportunities than in losses and grief.

Today I embrace the abundance in my life, all that I have and all that I'm not yet aware of that will be presented to me because I am open to it.

NOTES



JANUARY 8

Feelings

There were times in my life when I felt nothing. And times when I felt everything, much of which wasn't good. I wish I could go through life like all the people I see living their lives, seemingly unburdened and free of negative feelings. They seem to have mastered the art of feeling just enough.

As I meet others on a path of healing from grief, I am surprised that they, like I, seem overwhelmed by a personal loss. People who have not traveled this path express shock that I am having such a difficult time with my grief. "You seem like you're doing so well," they say. What I have learned is that, as the saying goes, everyone is fighting a private battle that others know nothing about.

Each of us has a palette of feelings that colors our day. And like a painter focusing on a specific part of their work, I can choose whether to focus on the light or the dark areas and, to the best of my abilities, select which shades to apply. Picasso had his "blue period," creating essentially monochromatic paintings in blue and blue-green. This period lasted between 1901 and 1904. He lived until 1973 and went through several different periods, including his "red period" and cubism and surrealism. I, too, will experience many "periods" in my life when some feelings will be more prominent than others.

**I am grateful for the range of feelings I possess
and for the awareness that some days
I will feel things differently and in different measure
than other days.**

NOTES



FEBRUARY 1

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I Am Not Alone

I felt no one could understand my grief. How could they? It was an experience that was unique to me. As I went through my day, there were countless times that I wanted to shout, “Don’t you know I’m in pain?” But I never did. They wouldn’t understand. Besides, it wouldn’t change anything. Certainly not for the better.

To be human is to love. It is part of the human experience. As is grief. Because nothing lasts forever – people, places, things – there will be times in our life when we must say goodbye to things we deeply care about. I am comforted by the realization that grief, as deep and personal as it is to me, is an experience shared by all. When I express my pain with people willing to listen, I am shocked at how much better I feel and how quickly that happens. Sometimes even sitting in silence with others who allow me the opportunity to do nothing more than feel my feelings is a great relief. My pain is not removed, but it is lessened. More importantly, the connections I make with the people who are willing to be with me as I feel my pain strengthen the bonds I have to them and to the humanity of every individual.

**My grief connects me to others, the world, and the great love
I am grateful I can experience as a feeling human being.**

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APRIL 10



Kindness

I'd like to think I am a kind person. I extend myself to others in need. I believe I am generally gentle towards others – okay, maybe not always in traffic – and that I am supportive and considerate.

Yet while I am kind to others, I have trouble extending this same graciousness to myself, especially when it comes to my grief. I feel like I should be stronger and more resilient. As I work with others healing their grief, I am kind and thoughtful. And yes, those working with me on my healing are kind to me. But I admit it makes me somewhat uncomfortable because I don't feel deserving of their kindness.

In working on my healing, I am beginning to accept that I am deserving of kindness and that I am a good person worthy of good things. I now understand that everyone experiences grief and that the gentle and compassionate thing to do is to show myself the same kindness I show others.

Today, I try not to judge myself for not being as “healed” as I think I should be. To get clarity and “right sizing,” I check in with others and my Grief Work Companion about my feelings. I have never been disappointed in the loving responses I've received.

**I treat myself with love, compassion, and kindness because I,
like all people, deserve these things.**

NOTES



NOVEMBER 7



Dates

Dates are important. Both literal dates on the calendar and the romantic and non-romantic dates we share with others. As we work our healing journey, many of us celebrate dates – the days, months, or years since we started our healing from grief, or time since we didn’t cross our bottom lines. It’s more likely than not that hearing others share the dates of their grief successes in meetings was instrumental in helping us define what we looked forward to celebrating, and then proudly sharing when we did.

Some of our most compelling dates are romantic ones we go on so we may learn about another person and share about ourselves. Regardless of how they unfurl – and whether a second date is desired by either person – much is learned.

Every day we are on a date with ourselves. And whether we are by ourselves or engaging with others, we learn more about who we are and how we react to people and experiences. As we review our day – and the many “dates” we’ve had throughout our day, both with ourselves and with others – we have an opportunity to look at what we’ve learned. Where were we gracious? Where were we selfish? When were we of service to others?

While we’re always on an unofficial date with ourselves, there can be value in treating ourselves to a more official solo date. It’s an opportunity to indulge in things that energize our spirit – like a visit to a museum or going to a record store – without having to worry if anyone else is enjoying the experience.

And the best thing about dating ourselves is we never go home alone.

**The time I spend with myself is priceless,
regardless of if I’m alone or with others.**

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DECEMBER 8

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Dis-Ease

Disease is a word that comes from 14th-century French. It is a joining of the words “des,” meaning "without, away," and “aise,” meaning "ease.” Disease affects our body. Dis-ease affects our spirit.

Dis-ease can be experienced when having discomfort managing difficult situations – disagreements, social problems, and financial or employment challenges, to name just a few. And I was experiencing them all. I’d moved with the person I was dating to the West Coast, which I never liked, only to be dumped shortly after we moved there. I had no friends. I had no job. I didn’t even have enough money to move back to where we were from.

I started working at a coffee shop. It was there I met someone who shared with me a loss they were going through. When I said how sorry I was and asked how they were doing, they shared that they’d started meeting with others to heal their grief. After hearing more about these meetings, it felt like something I should check out. So I did. At my first meeting, there were many people grieving a variety of things. And while their stories of loss and the specific challenges they faced as a result were unique, each seemed to have found a similar path that would help them work through their pain.

Today I have tools to work through my dis-ease.

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DECEMBER 22

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Replica

A replica is not the thing. It looks a lot like the thing. It may be an exact duplicate of the thing. But it's not the thing. An original Jeff Koons 41" tall balloon bunny sculpture sold in 2019 for over \$90M. You can get a 5" one on Amazon for \$15. Is the Amazon product the same? No. It's smaller. And costs \$90M less. But other than that, they're pretty similar.

We're sometimes asked, how does healing from grief work? And we say, the answer is in the question – H.O.W. – Honesty. Openness. Willingness.

Honesty is fundamental to healing. It begins with being honest with ourselves and admitting our just how much grief is impacting our life. We then commit to being honest with others. Sure, we could lie about our behaviors, not confessing to doing the things we'd committed to not doing, but to what end? To look good in front of others? Healing is not about looking good. It's about feeling good – and knowing we are acting in ways that support our healing and our spiritual growth.

Openness means we keep our minds open. We listen to the healing experiences of others and the suggestions from our Grief Work Companion. We are not obliged to take any suggestions, but if what is being offered seems to make sense – particularly if they have worked for others – we demonstrate Willingness to try them in our lives.

Honesty. Openness. Willingness. They only work for us in on our healing journey if we are living an authentic life, one that is free from self-deceptions and deceit.

I live an authentic life in which I am honest with myself and others.

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The Value of Gentle Daily Meditations on Grief and Loss

All of the 366 daily meditations follow a similar rhythm: a topic pertinent to grief and loss, a closing affirmation, and a notes area for recording what these words prompt within us. Each meditation is an opportunity to take a pause within the day for gentle reflection.

Some reflections may hold great power, resonating deeply with us, while others may not seem to connect with us at all. But it will be rare for a daily reading not to prompt some thoughts about our loss – and our healing – worth considering. Regardless, simply taking the time to turn our attention inward can be of great value.

No matter where you are on your path, or how you choose to move forward, we wish you hope and healing. Every day.