

Fall Message Series: The Cloud Over Everything

With little warning, 2020 brought us loss upon loss. Grief is among the most reliable of human experiences, yet it's rarely discussed in the open – or held and healed in common. In our Fall message series, we'll explore how to cope with grief, and move through some of its best-known qualities like anger, sadness, denial, bargaining, and acceptance. We'll gather under the cloud and look up, remembering that even when our bodies can't be in the same place, we remain connected by bonds of love.

Challenge:

In our culture, we rarely talk about grief. Have a conversation with someone about grief in general, something you are grieving right now, or anything else related to loss and grief.

Spiritual practice:

["Sitting With Grief: Finding Solace in Meditation"](https://www.headspace.com/blog/sitting-with-grief-finding-solace-in-meditation) by Andy Puddicombe @www.headspace.com/blog

Discussion questions:

Francis Weller wrote "The work of the mature person is to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other and to be stretched large by them. How much sorrow can I hold? That's how much gratitude I can give. If I carry only grief, I'll bend toward cynicism and despair. If I have only gratitude, I'll become saccharine and won't develop much compassion for other people's suffering. Grief keeps the heart fluid and soft, which helps make compassion possible." What does it mean to carry both grief and gratitude? How does this make compassion possible? What is something you are feeling grief about right now and how might that make you more compassionate to others?

Journal/art prompt:

Remembrance

Other resources:

[Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief](#) by David Kessler

["The Spiritual Path of Grief"](#) @spiritualityandpractice.com

["The Spiritual Path to Healing: An Introduction"](#) by Alan D. Wolfelt @griefwords.com

["Four TED Talks About Grief"](#) @glitterandgrief.com

["Humor Can Help You Manage Grief and Cope With Loss"](#) by Taylor Bennett @thriveworks.com

["Laughter and Grief"](#) by Mark Liebenow @huffpost.com

["Grief and Loss Activities"](#) by Dr. Alejandra Vasquez @www.joincake.com

["21 Grief Journaling Prompts"](#) by Jennifer Williamson @healingbrave.com

["How to Manage Grief Through Journaling"](#) by Mary Bolster @www.brainandlife.org

["The Edge of Grief: A Summer Reflection"](#) by Ellen Frankel @www.huffpost.com

["Grief Journaling Without Words"](#) by Mari L. McCarthy @www.createwritenow.com

["How to Make a Grief Art Journal"](#) by Sue Steiner @amulticoloredlife.blogspot.com

Resources from the Revs:

A son reflects on this father's dying with intention:

["Pa's Smile"](#) by Jaimal Yogis @lionsroar.com

A video game about helping souls transition from this life:

["Spiritfarer Is a Heartbreaking Meditation on Life"](#) by Natalie Flores @www.fanbyte.com

Medical professionals in early days of Covid:

["Bravery and Hope: 7 Days on the Front Line"](#) @youtube.com

A comedian live tweets her mom's death from Covid:

["A comedian watched her mom die from COVID on an iPad. Her live tweets will break you"](#) by Jill R Shah @www.latimes.com

How resting supports mourning:

["Rest Supports Grieving: Grief Rituals"](#) @thenapministry.wordpress.com

Mourning and mental health challenges as resistance to unjust systems:

["Blessed Are Those Who Mourn: Depression as Political Resistance"](#) by Bruce Rogers-Vaughn @link.springer.com

Connection as healing grief's heartbreak:

["Finding the Heart"](#) by Elaine Pagels @www.newyorker.com

From *On Being* "[Navigating Loss Without Closure](#)" and "[Living the Questions](#)" @onbeing.org

From *Irresistible* (formerly *Healing Justice Podcast*) "[Grief in a Time of Not Knowing](#)" @irresistible.org

["On Witness and Repair: A Personal Tragedy Followed by a Pandemic"](#) by Jesmyn Ward @vanityfair.com

["That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief"](#) by Scott Berinato @hbr.org

["The Absence of Public Mourning has Weakened our Ability to Fight Covid"](#) by Joshua Laden @religiondispatches.org

["Those We've Lost"](#) @nytimes.com

["Grief Amid the Pandemic"](#) by Arelis R. Hernández and Mark Berman @www.washingtonpost.com

["This is Our Season for Coaching Our Children through Disappointment"](#) by Kristen Howerton @www.washingtonpost.com

COVID Memorial: <https://covidmemorial.online/>

One example of art as a visible, public memorial: <http://ghostbikes.org/>

An app for contemplating your mortality: <https://www.wecroak.com/>

Songs:

["death bed \(coffee for your head\)"](#) by beabadoobee and Powfu

["No Hard Feelings"](#) by The Avett Brothers

["This Wild Darkness"](#) by Moby

["Migration of Souls"](#) by M. Ward