

How We Grieve: Relearning the World

Thomas Attig



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If we wish to understand loss experiences we must learn details of survivors' stories. The new version of *How We Grieve: Relearning the World* tells in-depth tales of survival to illustrate the poignant disruption of life and suffering that loss entails. It shows how through grieving we overcome challenges, make choices, and reshape our lives. These intimate treatments of coping with loss address the needs of grieving people and those who hope to support and comfort them. The accounts promote understanding of grieving itself, encourage respect for individuality and the uniqueness of loss experiences, show how to deal with helplessness in the face of "choiceless" events, and offer guidance for caregivers.

The stories make it clear that grieving is not about living passively through stages or phases. We are not so alike when we grieve; our experiences are complex and richly textured. Nor is grieving about coming down with "grief symptoms". No one can treat us to make things better. No one can grieve for us.

Grieving is instead an active process of coping and relearning how to be and how to act in a world where loss transforms our lives. Loss forces us to relearn things and places; relationships with others, including fellow survivors, the deceased, even God; and our selves, our daily life patterns, and the meanings of our life stories.

This revision adds an introductory essay about developments in the author's thinking about grieving as "relearning the world." It highlights and clarifies its most distinctive and still salient themes. It elaborates on how his thinking about these themes has expanded and deepened since the first edition. And it places his treatment of those themes in the broader context of current writings on grief and loss.

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