

## Books and Links for Adult

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reviewed by Jennifer Allen [www.jenniferallenbooks.com](http://www.jenniferallenbooks.com)

Whether you're reading a book because you want to know you aren't alone in what you're going through and it helps you to see how others coped, or you're reading to gain information and guidance, books can be great lifeboats when the seas get rough.

This (limited) list is organized into books for:

- Adults (parents/teachers/helpers) helping children/teens when loved one is ill—anticipatory grief
- Adults (parents/teachers/helpers) helping bereaved children/teens.
- Adult support using informative/self-help books and stories (memoir and novels) as bibliotherapy for anticipatory grief, caregiving and bereavement.

## Adults Helping Children & Teens with Anticipatory Grief

Key: AG= anticipatory grief, I=informative/self-help, Pa= child's parent is sick,  
Si=sibling sick, C=cancer

**A Tiny Boat at Sea: How to Help Children Who Have a Parent Diagnosed with Cancer** by *Izetta Smith (2000)* A brief, comprehensive guide for parents talking to their kids about their illness. Gives parents an understanding of their child's developmental needs and responses. [I/Pa/AG](#)

**Can I Still Kiss You? Answering Your Children's Questions About Your Cancer** by *Neil Russell (2001)* This book is written by a father with cancer and is formatted as Q&A giving the reader/parent help with finding the words/information to talk to their children about all phases of cancer diagnosis. [I/Pa/AG/C](#)

**How to Help Children Through a Loved Ones Serious Illness** by *Kathleen McQueu and Ron Bon (1996)* This book is a thorough, accessible resource for adult helpers. It includes coping/communication re: diagnosis, hospital visits, long-term illness and includes dealing with death as a possibility. [AG/I](#)

**Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child When a Parent is Sick** by *Paula K. Rauch, M.D. and Anna C. Muriel, M.D. (2005)* This book is based on the PACT program used at Massachusetts General Hospital and covers a wide range of emotional and practical aspects; from understanding your unique child and how to best communicate with him/her re: illness issues, to organizing a family support system. [I/AG/Pa](#)

**When a Parent Has Cancer** by *Wendy S. Harpham* The author is a physician and cancer survivor who addresses common problems that occur for children as when a parent goes through cancer diagnosis/treatment (ie. coping with uncertainty). Book includes *Becky's Worry Cup* - a book to be read aloud to kids and resources. [I/AG/Pa/C](#)

## Adults Helping Bereaved Children & Teens

Key G:= general grief, I=informative/self-help, Pa= parent died, Si=sibling died, S=suicide

**After a Parent's Suicide: Helping Children Heal** by *Margo Requarth, MFT (2008)* This is a very thorough guide covering help for all-age kids, from finding out through grief process over time. Includes chapters for spouse/co-parent. G/S/Pa

**But I Didn't Say Goodbye: For Parents and Professionals Helping Child Suicide Survivors** by *Barbara Rubel (2000)* This book can be read in parts and is intended as a read aloud by adult to child. Ten year-old boy loses Dad to suicide and has questions. Book takes the form of dialog Q&A with general guidance. Good for prompting conversation. Great resource lists (No pictures) S/IA

**Guiding Your Child Through Grief** by *Mary Ann and James P. Emswiler (2000)* Thorough. Based on personal experience and "The Cove" — a program for bereaved families. Well documented. I/G

**Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grown-ups** by *William Kroen and Pamela Espeland (1996)* This is brief and to-the-point guidance, with examples. Developmental—addresses grief for each age group. I/G

**It's Okay to Cry: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Through the Losses of Life** by *H. Norman Wright (2004)* An Interactive Recovery workbook for parents helping guide children through life losses (not limited to death losses) It goes with a book of same title, but most key points are repeated in workbook. Empowering and helpful. I/G

**Part of Me Died Too** by *Virginia Lynn Fry. (1995)* Excellent resource for helping adults (parents, caregivers, therapists, etc) Each chapter is a story of a family with a particular kind of loss—death of Dad, Mom, sibling, friend, etc. and via different means: illness, accident, murder, aids & suicide. It shows how the children are helped through the loss using creative methods. Epilogue follows children into adulthood. G/B/I

**When Children Grieve** by *John James and Russel Friedman (2001)* Action oriented and from personal experience with many anecdotes, includes six myths of children and adult grief. G/I

## Adult Support/ Anticipatory Grief, Caregiving & Bereavement

Key: AG= anticipatory grief (illness), G= general grief, CG= caregiving, D=death/dying,  
I=informative/self-help, B=Bibliotherapy (getting help via story)  
Illness or death pertains to: Pa= child's parent, Si=sibling/peer,  
Ap = adult's parent, Sp=spouse, Ch= child

### **Caregiving: The Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss and Renewal** by *Beth Witrogen McLeod (2000)*

This book combines story with applicable practical information and provides a spiritual perspective (multi-faith) on the experience of caregiving. [CG/I/B](#)

### **Death in Slow Motion: A Memoir of a Daughter, her Mother, and the Beast Called Alzheimer's** by

*Eleanor Cooney (2004)*. Raw and revealing account of a daughter witnessing first hand as caregiver, the long slow decline of her mother through Alzheimers. Uses flashbacks to review mother's life, making the losses of function more vivid and excruciating as we watch "who was" fade under the shell of "who is." Cooney dives into the dark places, using clever humor to pull herself and the reader through. Cooney speaks to the middle age group who is looking toward caring for their elder parents. [B/AG/Ap/CG](#)

### **Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice** *Kenneth J. Doka*

*Editor (2002)* This book is a great resource for healthcare clinicians as it provides a variety of articles from professionals in the field covering theory, practice and case examples to illustrate. [AG](#)

### **Dying Well** by *Ira Byock, M.D. (1997)* Author tells stories of his patients at the end of their lives.

Insightful vignettes illustrate the many possibilities of "dying well" and the full spectrum of issues involved. Good medical/ethical orientation. Q&A in back section. [D/I/B/CG](#)

### **Exploring Hell and Other Warm Places** by *Holly Whiteside (2010)* Memoir by **Caregiver's**

**Compass** author about caregiving her mother while also dealing with her own cancer. [AG/CG/D](#)

### **Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying** by

*Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley (1997)* This book provides guidance for being with someone as they go through (a gradual) dying process. Examples. Especially useful to the "helper". [CG/AG/D/I](#)

### **Fireflies – Nothing can Ease the Pain of Losing a Beloved Child. Nothing but a Miracle** by *David*

*Morrell (1988)* is fiction take on a non-fiction story of a father who loses his 16 year-old son to cancer. The mystical experiences he has are true, but held as fiction in order to play out aspects of the intense grief of the father. A play in time puts him back 40 years from his deathbed and at the deathbed of his son in order to re-do "if-only"s and try and save him. [AG/G/B/C](#)

**Good Grief** by *Lolly Winston (2004)* is a fictional story with incredible insight into a young widow's unique grieving process. It is an honest and sometimes funny perspective that brings light into the dark places of the human experience. [B/G/Sp](#)

### **Grace and Grit: Spirituality and Healing in the Life and Death of Treya Killam Wilber** by *Ken*

*Wilber (1991 Shambhala)* has written a revealing narrative of great depth, from both the perspectives of a husband-caregiver (philosopher) and his wife—who died after a five-year roller coaster with cancer. The focus is on the spiritual healing of each partner and their relationship through the course of Treya living with an illness. [B/AG/B/Sp](#)

**Hand Book for Mortals - Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness** by Joanne Lynn, MD Joan Harold, MD (1999) This is a thorough and accessible guide for both the caregiver and the patient, with practical information and advice. Great issue specific resources. Covers pre/post death, long term and sudden death and children/adult death. [I/AG/G/D/CG](#)

**Hannah's Gift - Lessons From a Life Fully Lived** by Maria Housden (2002), is a vivid memoir from a mother who's vivacious three year old daughter dies of cancer. Real, honest and inspiring, the story travels the path of a child's illness and death. Told in brief chapter vignettes that illustrate lesson themes. [AG/C/B](#)

**Healing Into Life and Death** by Steven Levine (1989) Using meditation to learn how to hold painful emotions. Focus is on healing, whether physical cure happens or not. Illness as spiritual journey. [AG/D/I](#)

**If Only I'd Had This Caregiving Book** by Maya Hennessey (2006) Based on her experience with her husband's cancer, the author gives practical advice she learned en-route. [CG/I/B](#)

**Learning to Sit in the Silence: A Journal of Caregiving** by Elaine Marcus Starkman (1993) The author's journal of caring for an aging parent and the influence on family life. Candid and easy to read. [CG/B](#)

**Living With Grief: Before and After the Death** edited by Kenneth Doka, Ph.D (2007) This is an in-depth compilation of articles by professionals in the field on aspects/implications of anticipatory grief, the illness experience and paths to healing grief both during and after long term illness. Of special interest to helping professionals. Part of the annual teleconference: **Living with Grief**. [AG/G/I](#)

**Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged**, edited by Kenneth Doka, Ph.D w/Joyce Davidson (1997) This is an in-depth compilation of articles by professionals in the field on aspects/implications of anticipatory grief, the illness experience and paths to healing grief both during and after long term illness. Of special interest to helping professionals. Part of the annual teleconference: **Living with Grief**. [AG/G/I](#)

**Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place** by Terry Tempest Williams (1992) This memoir follows the devastating changes in nature (the rising of the Salt Lakes) as they parallel the author's mother as she journeys to her eventual death from cancer. [AG/B/Ap](#)

**Share the Care: How to Organize a Group to Care for Someone Who is Seriously Ill** by Cappy Capossela and Sheila Warnock (2004) A thorough handbook (with forms for copying) for setting up a support network for someone who is ill. Told from experience. [I/CG](#)

**The Caregiver's Compass: How to Navigate with Balance and Effectiveness Using Mindful Caregiving** by Holly Whiteside (2009) Excellent book/journal for caregivers. Self-help by making a shift in orientation to caregiving. [AG/CG/I](#)

**The Courage to Grieve** by Judy Tatelbaum (1993) An accessible guide through grief written from both a clinical and personal perspective. Anecdotes help to illustrate concepts. Also by same author – **You Don't Have to Suffer** (geared to general loss and recovery) Website: [www.JudyTatelbaum.com](http://www.JudyTatelbaum.com) [G/I](#)

**The Four Things That Matter Most** by *Ira Byock, M.D. (2004)*, is a nonfiction self-help book for those facing the end of their lives, their loved ones and their helpers. Byock has worked for many years with patients approaching the end of life and has witnessed much suffering due to unresolved relationship issues getting in the way of “dying well.” The book uses personal vignettes from his life and his patients’ to show the four concepts of healing relationships. [I/B/D](#)

**The Helper’s Journey - Working With People Facing Grief, Loss and Life-Threatening Illness** by *Dale G. Larson (1993)* is a clinical and practical guide especially for those in the “helping” role. It offers generous excerpts from others and case examples. It covers caregiving issues thoroughly, including the areas of transpersonal, intrapersonal, interpersonal and the societal. [AG/G/I/CG](#)

**The Needs of the Dying: A Guide for Bringing Hope, Comfort and Love to Life’s Final Chapter** by *David Kessler (2000)* This book is for both the person facing death and his/her loved ones. It covers a wide range of physical, emotional and spiritual issues applicable to the dying process in a way that is easy to read and compassionate. Vignettes of real situations, with people of all ages and illnesses, help illustrate the issues. [I/D/AG/CG](#)

**The Year of Magical Thinking** by *Joan Didion (2005)* This is a validating memoir of the first year that follows the death of a spouse, giving incredible insight to the phenomena of Magical Thinking—all the what-if’s, if-only’s and other forms of crazy thought that one moves through on the road to accepting a loss. It also covers the complication of simultaneous loss/stressors (daughter’s life threatening illness) and the separation from the outer world. [G/AG/B/Sp](#)

**This Thing Called Grief: New Understandings of Loss** by *Thomas M. Ellis (2006)* This book provides a comprehensive, approachable guide to grief, acknowledging its vast uniqueness. It covers the 5 different levels effected by grief and dispels “myth” that there are predictable stages. Addresses family grief, using examples. [G/I](#)

**Tibetan Book of the Dead: First Complete Translation** edited by *Graham Coleman and Thupten Jinpa/ Gyurme Dorje translator (2007)* This is a translation of Tibetan Buddhist perspective on death—includes guidance on living, death process, after-death states and helping another through death process. [D/I](#)

**Tuesday’s with Morrie** by *Mitch Abom* brings forth the uncomfortable subjects of illness & dying in a way that is honest, approachable and inspirational through his contact with a friend/mentor who is living fully, while dying of ALS. [AG/D/B](#)

**Unattended Sorrow - Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart** by *Stephen Levine (2005)* Small, easy to digest chapters on the many facets of grieving. Spiritual and emotional issues addressed in heart-felt way. It is a validating and inspiring guide to healing process. [G/I/B](#)

**Unraveled** by *Maria Housden (2004 Harmony Books NY)* is the memoir sequel to Hannah’s Gifts told in the same voice but about the aftermath of the loss - the integrations of the lessons she learned through her daughter’s death. Courageously tells of a counter-cultural move to mother from a distance. [G/Ch/B](#)

**What Remains: A Memoir of Fate, Friendship and Love** by *Carole Radziwill (2005)* This is the story of JFK Jr. and his wife’s sudden death and JFK Jr’s cousin’s slow death to cancer as told by his wife (author) and best friend to JFK’s wife. [AG/G/B/Sp/Si](#)