Grief & Loss Books for Ministry Professionals

This is a list of books for ministry leaders (rather than books explicitly for the bereaved) who express an interest in learning more about the topic of death, dying and bereavement.

Ars Moriendi (The Art of Dying)


Catholic Resources

The following are a number of books that integrates scripture and Catholic theology in with advice for those who grieve.

*Seasons of Hope: Creating and Sustaining Catholic Bereavement Groups*, MacLeod, D. (1998) Notre The most widely used resource by parish leaders who sponsor grief support groups.


Christian

Road to Emmaus: Pastoral care with the dying and bereaved, Hoy, W. (2008) Compass Press. Hoy is a well respected figure in contemporary thanatology; he offers direction and hope for the bereaved.


Stephen Ministry Training Manual, (2000) Vol. 1, Modules 1-14, St. Louis: Stephen Ministry publications. The most widely used resource for training ministry volunteers. This resource provides a framework for visiting the sick through death and a year follow bereavement support.

Jewish Death & Grief Resources

The following are a number of Jewish resources that explain Jewish rituals and customs related to death, dying and bereavement.


Living with Loss, Healing with Hope: A Jewish Perspective Grollman, E. (2001)


Philosophical & religious perspectives on grief and loss


Hospice/End of life


Nature


A beautifully written book, written by a naturalist that looks at the ways that animals help to dispose of a carcass.

*Wild Comfort: The solace of Nature*, Dean Moore, K. (2010) Boston: Trumpeter. In an effort to make sense of several losses, the author turns to nature to reflect on the meaning of death in the cycle of life. Written by a college philosophy professor and naturalist who spends the summers in Alaska. One of the few books I read again and again.
Thanatology texts


*The Other Side of Sadness: What the new science of bereavement tells us about life after loss* Bonnano, George, (2009). New York: Basic Books. Written by one of the more influential researched today. Bonnano support his assertion with research that most people are resilient and will not need a grief counselor. A must have resource for those who work in the field.

*Ambiguous Loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief,* Boss, P. (1999) Cambridge: Harvard Press. This influential book identifies segments of the population whose grief is made more difficult and consequently disenfranchised, e.g., Alzheimer’s & Dementia patients, missing persons, etc.


Originally publishes in the 1960s, the tiny volume, written by a minister, stands the test of time and
offers practical support to the bereaved.

An essential resource for those who work with the bereaved, articulates the four tasks of mourning
model.

Necessary Losses: the loves, illusions, dependencies, and impossible expectations that all of us have to
multitude of loss and posits that growth primarily takes place through addressing the challenges that
force us to grow.

Death in America


Yale University Press, and Rest in Peace: A cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in
on the history of death in America.

Mitford wrote a scathing critique of the funeral Industry in America. This book is a revised and edited
version. Her book, published just prior the death of President John F. Kennedy and shortly before
Kübler-Ross’ 1965 interviews with dying patients, is considered one of the key resources that inspired
the examination of Thanatology related

the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss, Kübler-Ross, E. and Kessler, D. (2005). New York:
Scribner. The book that translates Kübler-Ross model for dying to the experience of grieving.


American Afterlife: Encounters in the Customs of Mourning, Sweeney, K. (2014) Athens: Univ. of
Georgia Press. Explores death in contemporary America.


Poetry & Prose

Rather than turning to the self-help section to cope with loss, another approach is to explore poetry, novels, and movies whose writers struggle to make sense of loss.


A Broken Heart Still Beats: After your Child Dies, editors, McCracken, A and Semel, M. (1998) Minneapolis, Hazelden. Edited by a social Worker and a journalist, both of whom have experienced the death of a child, this book collects of extended quotes about life, death & loss by well known authors, from Shakespeare to Raymond Carver.


Poetry of Mourning: The modern elegy from Hardy to Heaney, Ramazani, J. (1994) Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. While not a book of poetry, this is a scholarly book that looks at how elegy has hanged over time.

Faith Based Bereavement Ministry Resources


Stephen Ministry. Founded in 1975, the program is used by 160 different denominations in 24 countries. More than 600,000 laypeople have received Stephen Ministry training. This program’s greatest strength lies in its well-developed training program for pastoral ministry volunteers. In addition, Stephen Ministry offers four booklets that the parish can send to bereaved parishioners over the course of one year. However, some of Stephen Ministry resources seem outdated.

Grief Share is a grief support group model developed in the evangelical tradition. Its resources are biblically based and include DVD’s and other group exercises. Their website offers books and other resources for purchase. Bereaved individuals can also sign up to receive a daily inspirational email. Although there are testimonials on their website, you have to purchase the program in order to evaluate it. Additionally, I am not sure that every denomination would support the theological point of view presented in the materials.

Walking The Mourner’s Path is another support group model developed in the Episcopalian tradition. The Rev. Danielle Morris founded this program in 1995. This ministry invites pastoral leaders to attend a workshop and be trained in this program. Again, not enough information is available to evaluate the program unless you attend the workshop.

The Bereavement Ministry Program, is a Roman Catholic resource that provides one year’s worth of mailings, covering a variety of topics for coping with loss. The resource does not offer training for ministers or any system to keep track of the bereaved, nor does it offer a model for a parish based grief support group.

Guiding People Through Grief: How to Start and Lead Bereavement Support Groups, offers a useful framework for creating a parish based group.
Online Resources for the Bereaved

AARP http://www.aarp.org
An excellent site for many reasons and they have a number of grief and bereavement resources as well.

A heart braking choice http://www.aheartbreakingchoice.com
A site for parents who have to make the heartbreaking choice to end a pregnancy.

Adult loss of A Sibling http://www.adultsiblinggrief.com
This site is dedicated to the formation of a support community for those who have suffered the devastating loss of an adult sibling. Although the subjects of death, dying, and grief are more widely discussed now than in years past, the subject of adult sibling grief has been largely ignored by the grief support community, leaving surviving adult siblings to endure their grief in silence. For some reason, our society fails to recognize the depth of love we feel for our brothers and sisters and the consequent grief felt at their passing.

Alive Alone http://www.alivealone.org
Alive Alone is an organization for benefit bereaved parents, whose only child or all children are deceased. They provide a self-help network and publications.

Association of Death Education and Counseling http://www.adec.org
A professional site for members and visitors with great grief resources.

Before I Die http://www.thirteen.org
This site explores the medical, ethical, and social issues surrounding end-of-life care in America today.

Beyond Indigo http://www.beyondindigo.com
A commercial site dealing with many grief issues. The site asks for a membership. It has a newsletter, articles and books.

Center for Loss http://centerforloss.com
Dr. Alan Wolfelt’s site with many free downloads and a bookstore.

Center for Loss and Renewal http://www.lossandrenewal.com
The Center for Loss & Renewal is a leading New York City psychotherapy and consultation group dedicated to the practice of life transition therapy. All of our therapeutic energies are focused on helping clients to discover resilience, hope, meaning and successful coping strategies in the presence of loss and pain.
**The Compassionate Friends** [http://www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)
The largest self-help organization in the world for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. They provide more than 650 local chapters in the U.S. and Canada, with national and regional conferences. TCF offers national and local newsletters, books and tapes, and other related bereavement resources.

**Cyber Life** [http://www.cyberlife.com](http://www.cyberlife.com)
Cyber Life Eternal is a non-profit foundation dedicated to the perpetual maintenance of the "Library of Life". The Library of Life is an eternal resting place for life, not death. We are committed to helping people preserve their heritage by maintaining, via the Internet the biographies of men and women of the world that may never be found in encyclopedias. It is our belief that this technological medium of the Internet may preserve the wisdom and achievements of the common people of the world for all mankind, including their descendants, to access free of charge for generations to come.

**Gates of Remembrance** [http://www.gatesofremembrance.com](http://www.gatesofremembrance.com)
One of many online memorial websites.

**Grief Inc.** [http://www.griefinc.com](http://www.griefinc.com)
The website of Darcey Sims, Ph.D. A noted grief speaker. Newsletter, gifts and memorial gift.

**Grief Net** [http://griefnet.org](http://griefnet.org)
A great site for online grief support groups. Grief Net is a not-for-profit organization with resources and books.

**Grief Recover Institute** [http://www.grief-recovery.com](http://www.grief-recovery.com)
A professional site by the authors of the Grief Recovery handbook.

**Griefriver.com** [http://www.griefriver.com](http://www.griefriver.com)
Thom Dennis’ website with downloadable articles on the river model of grief.

The Grief Watch site was created to provide you with bereavement resources, memorial products and links that can help you through your personal loss. It also serves as an excellent educational tool for all who travel down the road of grief.

**Grifworks** [http://griefworks.com](http://griefworks.com)
A page to add balm to the hurts of life.. Bringing you local resources, information, and education about grief and loss in your life, as well as links to pages that might be helpful to you. Located in Montgomery County, Maryland, and serving the Washington, DC, metro area.
Groww http://www.groww.org
An independent haven for the bereaved developed by the bereaved - On GROWW, you will find your partners in pain sharing their experience and strength. They have message boards, resource listings and secure chat rooms hosted by the most loving people on the internet for all who are grieving.

International Association of Near Death Studies http://www.iands.org
A site that addresses the issue of near death experiences.

Journey of Heats http://www.journeyofhearts.org
Journey of Hearts combines elements of medicine, psychiatry, poetry, prose and images into an unique web experience. It also contains a variety of medical and other resources--articles, self-assessment quizzes, medical information and links to help the person who has experienced a loss.

Legacy.com http://www.legacy.com
Legacy.com is an online media company that collaborates with newspapers in North America, Europe, and Australia to provide ways for readers to express condolences and share remembrances of loved ones.

Life Files http://www.lifefiles.com
Life Files was created for family and friends to honor and remember cherished loved ones in a private online environment.

Mothers in Sympathy and Support http://www.misschildren.org
MISS is an international grief support site for families who have experienced the death of a child.

My Last Email.com http://www.mylastemail.com
A site to send message to loved ones after you have died.

Otribe.com http://www.Otrib.com
Otribe lets you name an heir to your Facebook account and specify its handling after your die. This site offers free, funeral planning, notification and tribute service and is dedicated to helping consumers in their time of grief.

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) http://www.pomc.com
A national organization for families who have experienced the death of a child (of any age) who was murdered.

Pet Loss http://www.petloss.com
Welcome to Petloss.com, a gentle and compassionate website for pet lovers who are grieving over the death of a pet or an ill pet. Here you will find personal support, thoughtful advice, The Monday Pet Loss Candle Ceremony, Tribute Pages, healing poetry like Rainbow Bridge & much more.
Sena Foundation http://www.sena.org
Sena Foundation has been a leader in the field of Grief and Loss for over a decade. A direct outgrowth of the hospice/death dying movement, Sena Foundation offers free support for those going through catastrophic loss. In addition to working with those who grieve the death of a loved one, Sena also offers support to those suffering loss issues resulting from, aging, divorce, rape, substance abuse, and other social problems not commonly associated with grief and loss.

TAPS http://www.taps.org
The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS) is a national non-profit organization made up of, and providing services to, all those who have lost a loved one on active duty with the Armed Forces.

The Funeral Directory http://www.thefuneraldirectory.com
A professional site for anyone with questions related to funeral services.

Widows List http://www.widowslist.com
Sandra Pesman, and her daughter, both widows, founded this site. The web community aims to provide a platform where "Women in the Widow 'hood" have a voice; and where they can discuss their unique challenges, conflicts, solutions and joys; families, friends, jobs and leisure time. The "Widows' Lists" offer practical and tested places where widows have found answers and trustworthy service providers.

Widow Net http://www.widownet.org
Established in 1995, it is the first online information and self-help resource for, and by, widows and widowers. Topics covered include grief, bereavement, recovery, and other information helpful to people, of all ages, religious backgrounds and sexual orientations, who have suffered the death of a spouse or life partner.

Willowgreen http://willowgreen.com
Willowgreen is a leading provider of information and inspiration in the areas of illness and dying, loss and grief, healthy caregiving, life transition, and spirituality. Willowgreen is the creation of James E. Miller, writer and photographer, trainer and speaker, grief counselor and clergyman. Each Willowgreen book, audiotape, and videotape is a unique blend of helpful advice and age-old wisdom, sound psychology and deeply-rooted spirituality, the practical along with the poetic. Jim has also produced materials designed specifically for congregational use.

Web Healing http://www.webhealing.com Tom Golden
Webhealing.com was the internet's first interactive grief web site and has served the bereaved on the net since 1995. It offers grief discussion boards where men and women can discuss issues related to grief and healing or Browse Recommended Grief books. The site's originator Tom Golden LCSW of Washington D.C. is an internationally known psychotherapist, author, and speaker on the topic of healing from loss.