



**30-DAY
JOURNAL**

Grief is a Journey

Get Started on the Path toward Healing



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If you have opened this journal, you've lost someone you love, and that is perhaps the most difficult thing we face in life. This journal is designed to help you find peace and comfort as you work through your grief feelings and find a way to move forward after loss.

Each day will include a writing prompt or activity suggestion tailored to help you engage with your thoughts and feelings. It's up to you how much you engage with the content, but the more effort you put in, the greater the benefit to you. May your journey through these pages bring you a peace you didn't expect and a greater closeness to your loved one's memory.



Embracing the Pain of Grief

Grief is an inescapable part of life. And with it comes a variety of emotions – sadness, anger, regret, guilt, disbelief, shock. No matter what you’re experiencing, you must face those feelings before you can move forward on the path toward healing. This doesn’t mean you will forget your loved one or “get over” the loss; it simply means you will find a way to move forward, embrace joy, and honor your loved one’s life as you continue to live yours.



Honoring the Pain of Grief

Dr. Alan Wolfelt, a nationally respected grief counselor and educator, puts it this way:

From my own experiences with loss as well as those of thousands of grieving people I have companioned over the years, I have learned that you cannot go around the pain of your grief. Instead, you must open to the pain. You must acknowledge the inevitability of the pain. You must gently embrace the pain. You must honor the pain.

“What?” you naturally protest.

“Honor the pain?”

As crazy as it may sound, your pain is the key that opens your heart and ushers you on your way to healing.

Honoring means recognizing the value of and respecting. It is not instinctive to see grief and the need to openly mourn as something to honor; yet the capacity to love requires the necessity to mourn. To honor your grief is not self-destructive or harmful, it is self-sustaining and life-giving.

Your grief is the result of an injury to your spirit. Now you must attend to your injury. As human beings, we possess deep, complex, multi-faceted emotions, and it's our responsibility to learn how we individually need to process those emotions. If you are facing a season of grief – whether you've lost someone you loved or are experiencing some other pain – keeping a grief journal might be the answer to helping you cope with and process your feelings.






5 Reasons Why

A GRIEF JOURNAL CAN HELP

As Dr. Wolfelt said, a grief journal may be the answer to helping you cope with and process your feelings. There are several key reasons why a grief journal is a proven method for helping people work through their feelings of grief.

- 1** Writing things down can often make you more aware of what you are feeling. For some people, they don't know what they are feeling until they write it down. Putting thoughts and emotions into words forces you to slow down and gives you an opportunity to deeply reflect on, and perhaps better understand, the emotions within you. It's a method of self-reflection and can reveal things you haven't consciously thought about.
- 2** Journaling is an opportunity to remember your loved one. Recall your favorite memories. Record their favorite colors, smells, foods, places. Write down what they meant to you and why.

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- 3 A grief journal gives you a safe and judgment-free place
| to explore your jumbled thoughts and feelings, to find
| ways to remember your loved one, and to record your
| ongoing journey through grief. Often, it's comforting to
| look back and see just how far you've come from day one.

 - 4 There are no rules. This journal belongs to you, and you
| can utilize it in whatever way you see fit. There may be
| days when you don't feel like writing. That's okay – you can
| also draw, color, paint, glue, or create something else in
| the journal's pages. It's entirely up to you – it's your space.

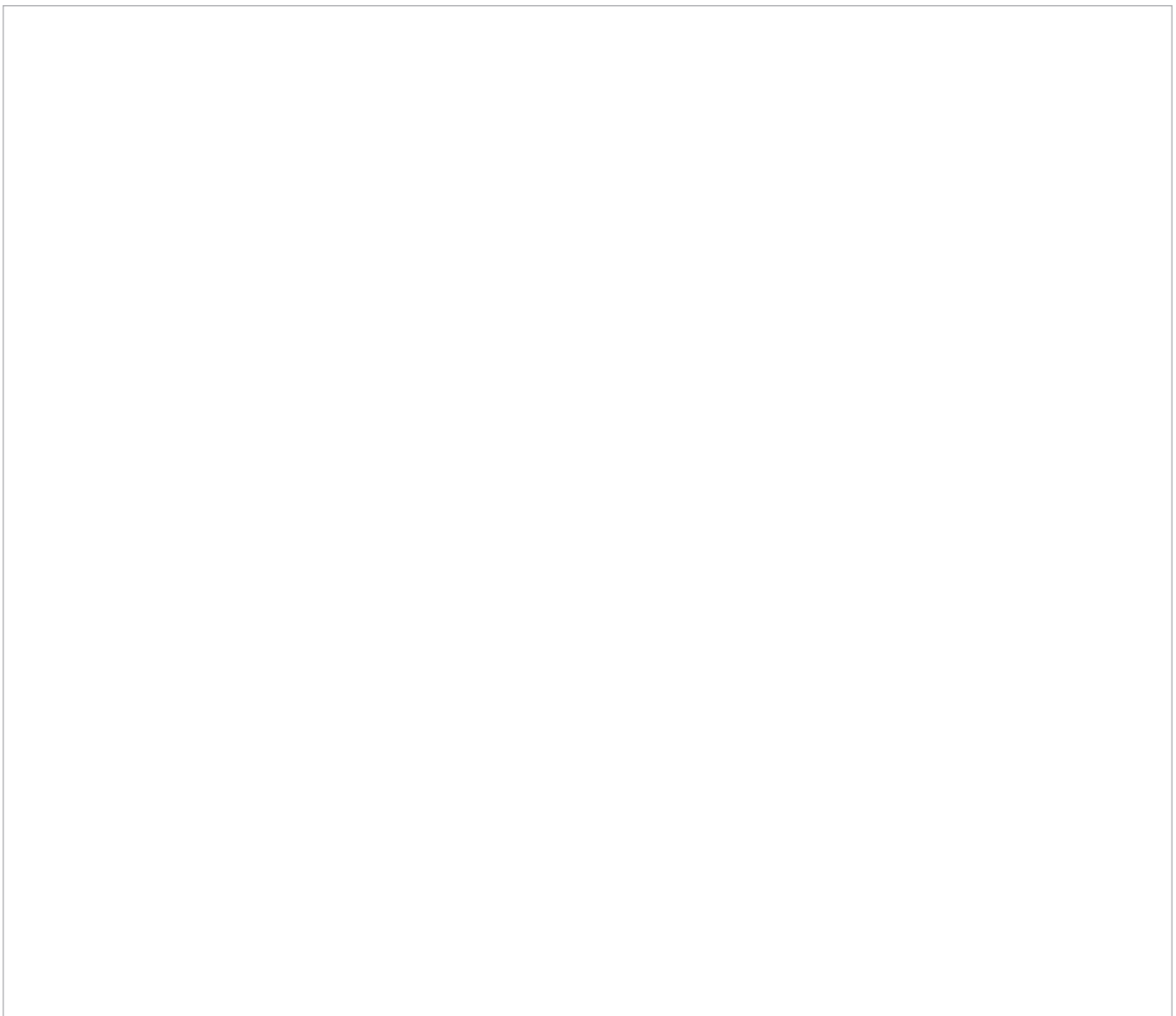
 - 5 Journaling can improve physical and emotional health.
| By putting your thoughts and feelings into words, they
| come into sharper focus, and you can outwardly express
| what you inwardly feel. Among other things, this outward
| expression, this releasing of thoughts and emotions,
| reduces stress and improves sleep.

Write what comes out and don't be ashamed of it. Some of the things you feel may be unexpected or scary, and that's normal. Giving voice to your feelings will help you identify them, take responsibility for them, and eventually, release them.

PRE-EXERCISE:

How are You Feeling Right Now?

Before you get started, it's good practice to measure where you are right now, at the very beginning of the journey. In this space, draw a picture that represents how you are feeling at this moment. We're not all artists, so stick figures are fine, but if you'd prefer, you can write out how you feel today.



Now, it's time to begin your 30-day journey.

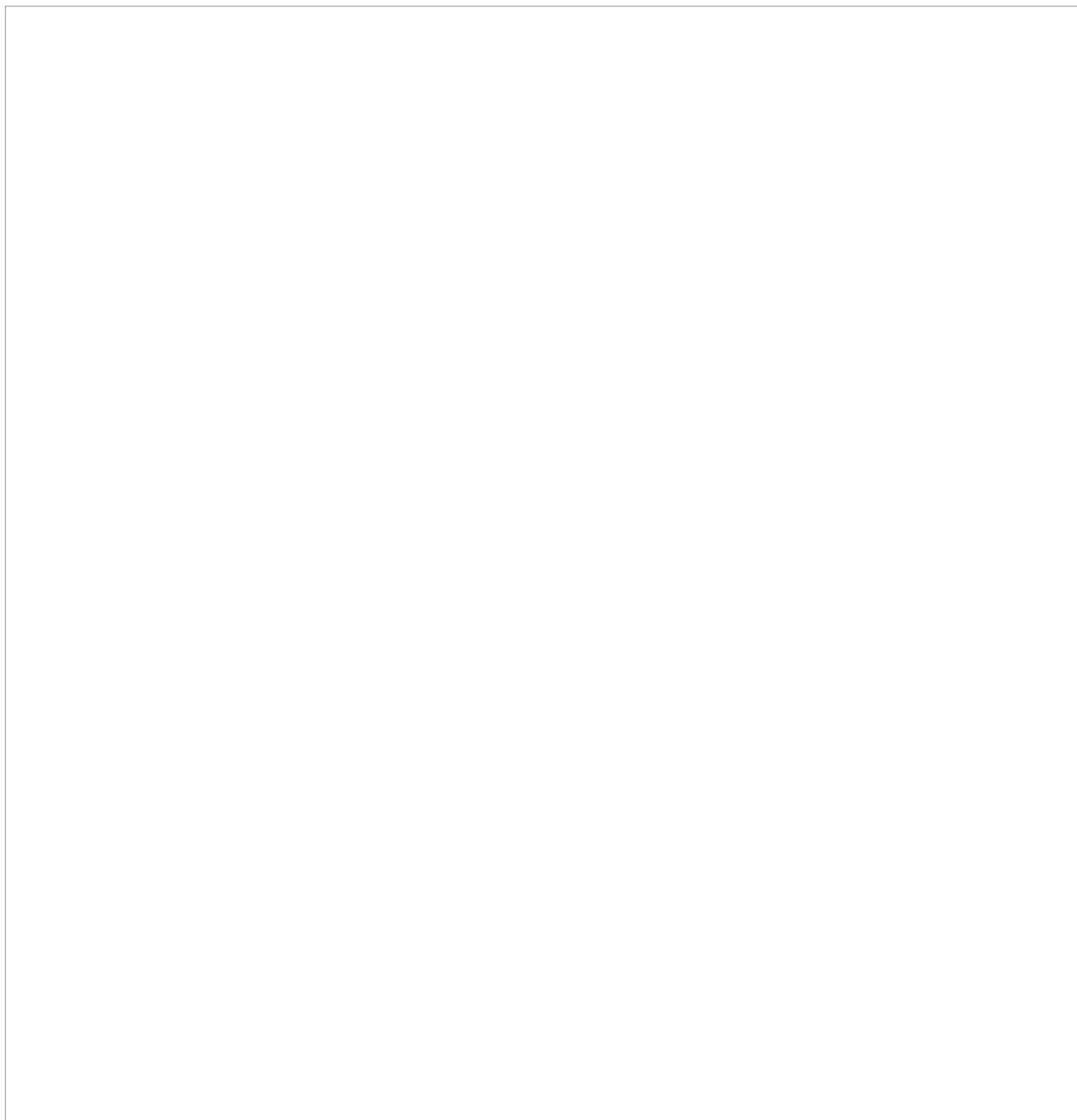


GRIEF IS A JOURNEY

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get you started on the
path toward healing*

DAY 8

Create a photo collage with some of your favorite photos and use one word to describe why you love each one.









*“Never. We never lose our loved ones. They accompany us; they don’t disappear from our lives.
We are merely in different rooms.”*

PAULO COELHO

DAY 15

Your loved one was an entirely unique person and who they are matters. Complete this page to remember them.

<i>Strengths</i> 	<i>Hobbies</i> 	<i>Accomplishments</i> 
<i>Weaknesses</i> 	<i>Closest Friends</i> 	<i>Quirks</i> 

“Wherever a beautiful soul has been, there is a trail of beautiful memories.”

RONALD REAGAN

DAY 17

How did your loved one make you feel? Bonus: draw a picture below that depicts this feeling.

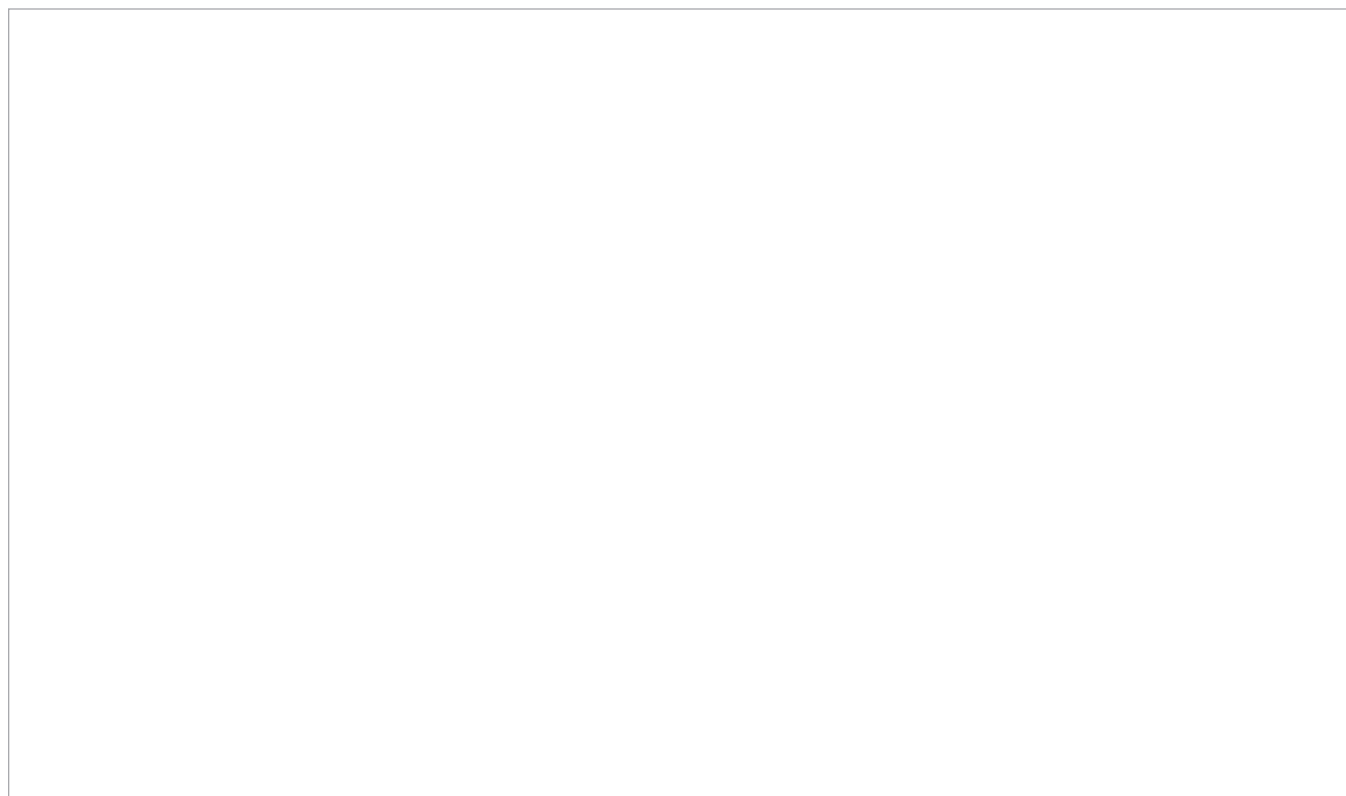


“Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.”

LEO TOLSTOY

DAY 29

You drew a picture at the very beginning of this journal. Consider how you feel today and draw a new picture or write how you are feeling.



"I know now that we never get over great losses; we absorb them, and they carve us into different, often kinder, creatures."

GAIL CALDWELL



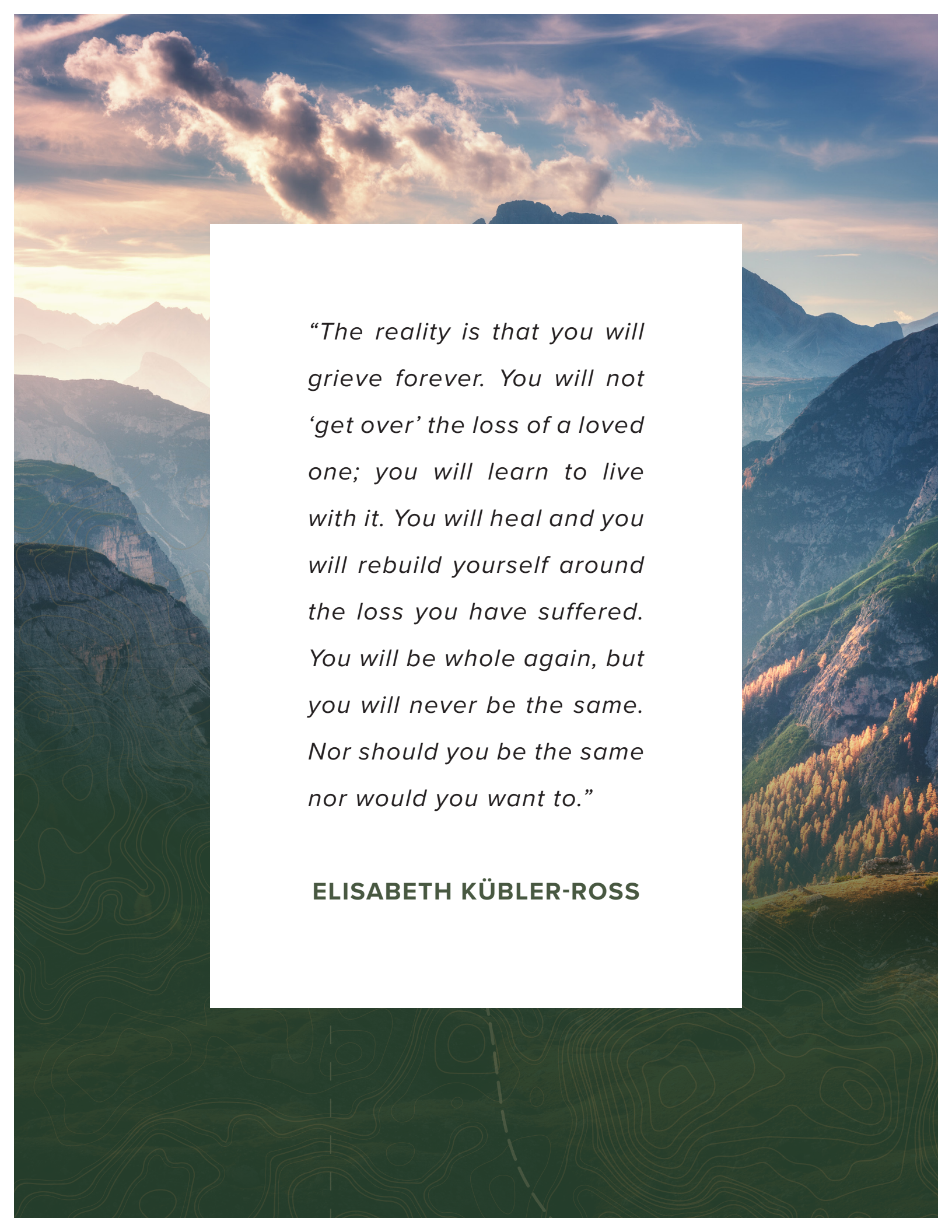


The grief journey doesn't end here.

There's no specific timeline for grief. For some, it takes weeks, and for others, years. No matter where you're at, if this exercise has been helpful, keep journaling. Keep working through your feelings and emotions. It will help, and you will find a way to move forward.

Best wishes on the journey toward healing and finding renewed hope in life!





“The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.”

ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS



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Planning a funeral is a very personal task, and it is important that you have the information you need to make educated decisions. For more information on the basics of funeral planning, go to www.funeralbasics.org.