

AGAPE



NAVIGATING GRIEF

**MAR 2026
ISSUE 08**

DEAR READER

Hi Friends!

When I first started working on Agape, something that was important to me was the idea that all of our readers, no matter how small, could understand big ideas if we found the right words.

This issue is the second in our “Tough Topics” series, and it is focused on the experience of grief.

Grief is the big emotions we feel when we lose something or someone we cared about.

Everyone experiences grief, but it can sometimes be treated like a big kid word, something we shouldn't feel, or a childish reaction that we're supposed to “get over”.

I hope that this issue can help us all to feel seen when we experience big feelings and help us to be better friends to people when they lose something they love!

Peace, Miriam
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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GOOD GRIEF! YOUR FEELINGS ARE NORMAL!

By John

EVEN BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, YOUR BRAIN HAD THE CAPACITY TO HAVE FEELINGS.

You simply could feel happy, sad, mad and scared. After you were born and your brain and your relationships with other people became more **complex**, so did your feelings:

- happiness can include excited, delighted, and ecstatic;
- scared can cover anxious, worried, and terrorized;
- mad ranges from irritated to angry;
- sadness can become grief.

Grief is a normal emotion that all of us feel when there is a loss of something important in our lives.

Most commonly, grief is associated with the death of someone we care about, like a friend or a family member.

It's also normal to grieve the loss of a pet or an object that meant a lot to us. Moving away from a place that feels safe and familiar can also make us feel grief.

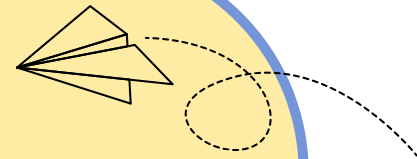
There are **many** ways that a person can experience grief. Like all emotions, grief can affect not only our feelings, but also our *thinking* and our *behavior*. We can define grief as all the ways we feel, think, and act when we experience a loss.



How we grieve can be connected to how much we value that which was lost, and sometimes our grief reactions can surprise us. Losing a toy or a piece of clothing might find us a bit angry and mildly sad for a while.

The death of a relative might make us feel depressed, scared, angry enough to strike out, and/or like crying often. **All of these are normal responses to loss.**

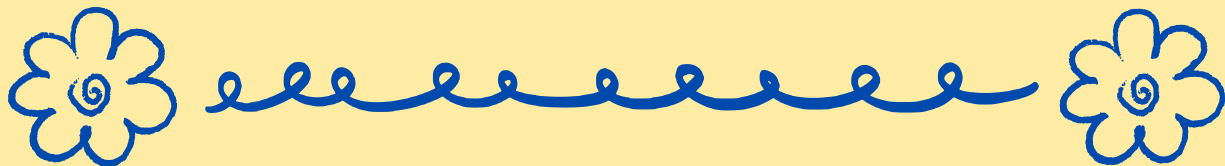
SO WHAT CAN WE DO TO MANAGE OUR GRIEF?



One of the best ways is to speak honestly with a caring adult you trust. That might be a parent, a relative, a teacher, a counselor, or a pastor. **Sharing our feelings with another person helps us feel not so alone.**

So can talking with friends, particularly children who have had similar experiences. Expressing yourself through art, such as drawing or working with clay can help you to understand how you are feeling.

Some people create something to remember what they lost. Others find value in journaling about what they are thinking and feeling. Many find comfort in prayer.



There is no one right way to respond to experiences of grief. Nor is there a magical deadline for someone to be “over” a loss. Even though we all share the capacity to have this amazing array of emotions that includes grief, we are also unique.

If you find yourself experiencing grief, know that you are not alone and that you can, with your strength and the help of your community, manage all your feelings – including grief!

Peace be with you!

GRIEF, COURAGE, AND A STRONG SPIRIT

By Kyli



Have you ever felt really sad about something that wasn't fair? Maybe someone was treated badly. Maybe you lost someone or something important. That heavy feeling in your chest? That's called grief. And even though it doesn't feel good, grief is not a weakness. **It is actually a sign that your heart cares deeply.**

Kingian Nonviolence teaches us that nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. Courage is not about pretending we don't feel sad, angry, or hurt. Real courage means we are brave enough to feel those emotions, and then choose to use them in a *positive way*.

When we see injustice, it is normal to feel upset and to feel grief. That upset feeling shows that we know something is wrong. **It shows we have empathy. It shows we care.**

Grief can be *powerful*. It reminds us that people matter. It reminds us that love matters. When we allow ourselves to feel grief instead of hiding it, **we can turn that emotion into energy for change.** Instead of hurting others, we can speak up.

WE CAN ORGANIZE. WE CAN CREATE. WE CAN HELP.




Kingian Nonviolence also reminds us that we must avoid internal violence of the spirit. That means we cannot let unspoken anger, sadness, or pain grow inside us.

When we ignore grief, it can turn into bitterness. Bitterness can make our hearts hard and unable to recognize when someone else is in pain. And when our hearts become hard, it is harder to build peace.

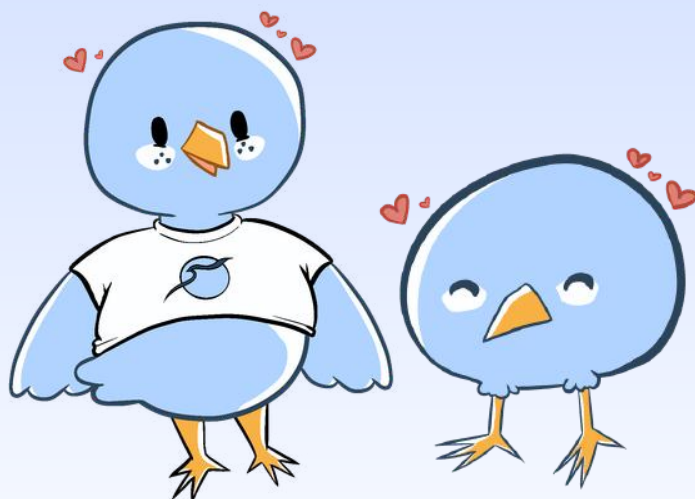
Processing grief means talking about it, writing about it, praying or meditating, drawing, or sharing with someone we trust. It means admitting, “This hurt me,” instead of pretending we are fine. When we take care of our spirits, we offer care and love.



Nonviolence is not about ignoring how we feel. It is about guiding our emotions with wisdom and compassion. Grief tells us we care. Courage tells us to act. And a peaceful spirit helps us act in ways that build understanding instead of division.



**YOUR FEELINGS ARE NOT SOMETHING TO HIDE.
THEY ARE PART OF YOUR STRENGTH.
WHEN YOU HONOR THEM, YOU HELP CREATE A
MORE LOVING AND JUST WORLD.**



I DON'T WANT TO GROW UP

By Marie



Have you ever had the feeling that time is moving too fast?

That you aren't ready for something to end or that you want things to stay the same?

Do you get nervous when you think of changes and what comes next?

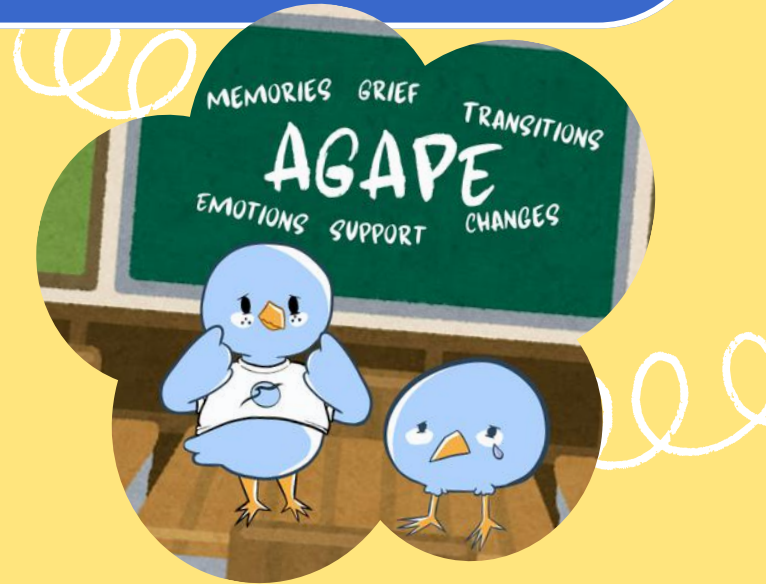
I bet the answer is yes to these questions, at least some of the time. **Sometimes we feel emotions of grief during transitions - even really good transitions!**

I remember my fourth grade year as my favorite year of school. My best friend was in my class and I loved my teacher. We had class pets that I occasionally got to bring home on the weekend and school breaks to care for. It was the best year!

As we got closer to the end of the year, we started to prepare for fifth grade. Fifth grade was the top of the school. We'd be the oldest grade and the classrooms were on the third floor. We were excited, but I was also beginning to feel nervous and even sad. I didn't want to leave fourth grade. **I wanted things to stay the same.**

Don't get me wrong, I wanted to grow up and experience new things. I just didn't want to grow up yet. I wanted to take all the same people and pets with me.

Why couldn't our fourth grade class just become our fifth grade class? While all the energy was shifting towards excitement for the summer and for the next year, **I felt grief.**



Grief can be experienced over good things too. Changes bring lots of feelings and while celebration is one of them, so is sadness and concern. **Growing up will bring lots of change.**

Remember it is okay to use all of the tools you've learned for feeling grief as you go through these transitions. It is important to share memories, make space for lots of different emotions, and reach out to others for support.

Also, fifth grade was okay! I didn't have a class pet and my best friend wasn't in my class, but I had a pretty great teacher and made new friends. And then the next year, I got to go to middle school - talk about another transition with lots of feelings!



CLOTHESPIN WORRY DOLLS

Worry dolls are a popular Guatemalan craft, which can be found in many markets. They were first a part of ancient Mayan culture. Tradition says they can help with your worries if you whisper them to your doll and then tuck your doll under your pillow before you fall asleep. What worries you?

Supplies: Traditional Clothespin, Marker, Liquid Glue & Colorful String



1

Choose your shirt color from string.



2

Glue the end of your selected color to your clothespin, and begin wrapping the pin. You may find it helpful to cover the entirety of the area you would like to cover with glue, so that your string sticks as you wrap it.



3

Choose your pants color. Repeat the same process for wrapping, this time around one "leg" at a time.



4

Let the glue dry.



5

Add a face, and your doll is ready! You may also get creative – add accessories to your doll with whatever supplies you have!

GOODBYE MIKEY

By Wendy



What an exciting evening! As they walked into the house after Kids' Club, Ruthie told Chris, Mom, and Dad all about the kickball game. "I got Gabriel and Charles out at home plate! It was epic!"

Dad laughed. "That's awesome!! I would've loved to have seen their faces after that!"

Mom went still. She said to Dad in a strange voice, "David, can you look at Mikey. I think something's wrong."

Dad knelt by Mikey, the family cat, and petted him. "Ladies," Dad said quietly, with tears, "Mikey died while we were gone."

Chris began crying loudly. "NOOOOOOOO!!!!!" she screamed. Ruthie was quiet. She ran from the room.

While Mom hugged Chris, Dad found Ruthie in her room.

"How are you?" he asked as he sat down next to her.

"Why does she have to cry like that? I hate that Mikey died but why is she so loud?!" Ruthie scowled angrily.

Dad thought for a minute. "Oh Ruthie. I think Chris' feelings kind of exploded out big and loud, while yours might be quiet and deep inside. Sometimes when someone dies, people cry or get angry. Sometimes everything feels big and wrong, or they don't know what to say.

It's okay that we have different ways of showing we cared about Mikey. Mom and I are here for you: we can listen if you need to talk or just sit together if you need to be with someone. Mikey was lucky to be so loved."





GO & DO



MEMORY COLLAGE

Our grief is often rooted in how much we love something or someone that we lose. I like to write about things I love to remember them. This space is for you to create your own memory collage as a way of remembering something or someone you love. You can write, or draw, or paint, or glue things in this space - it is yours to create in whatever way you feel helps you remember!

**HOW I FEEL WHEN I THINK
ABOUT THIS SPECIAL
PERSON OR THING**

MY FAVORITE EXPERIENCE

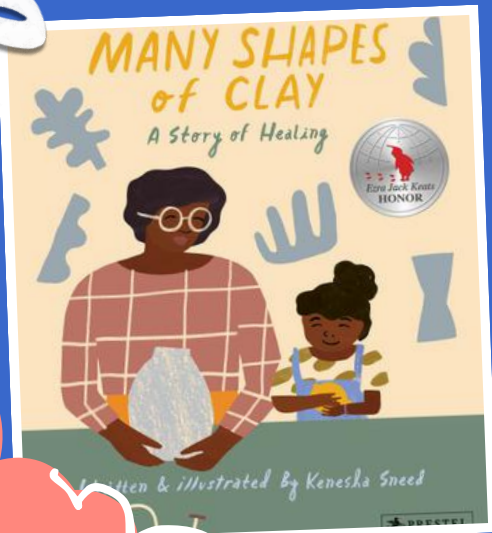


**SOMETHING THAT IS
SPECIAL TO ME**

**I HOPE I ALWAYS
REMEMBER _____**

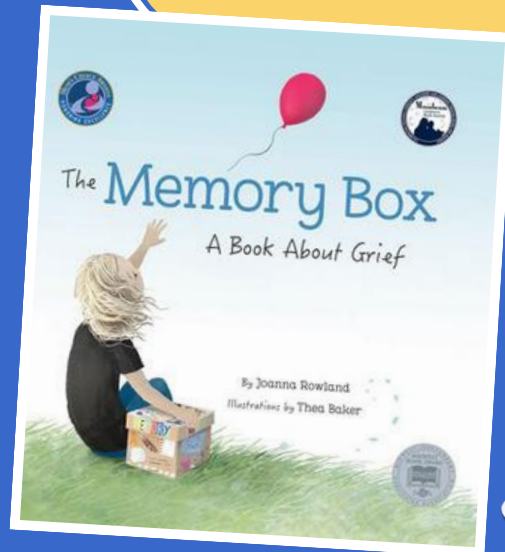


BOOK NOOK



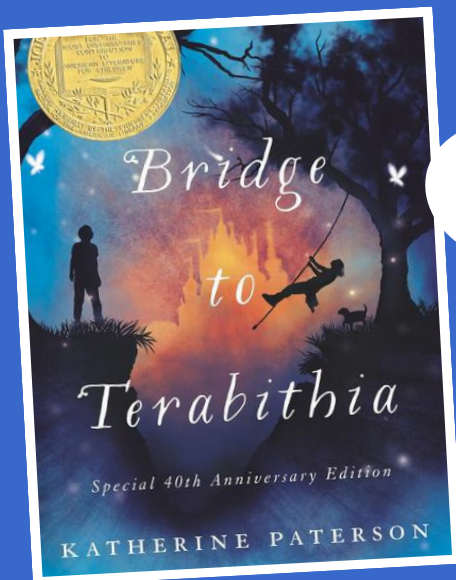
MANY SHAPES OF CLAY: A STORY OF HEALING

Kenesha Sneed
Reading Ages 4-6



THE MEMORY BOX: A BOOK ABOUT GRIEF

Joanna Rowland
Reading Ages 4-8



THE BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

Katherine Paterson
Reading Ages 9-12

*Bonus book,
by some
friends of
mine!*



MARIA'S KIT OF COMFORT

Kathy Fry-Miller & David Doudt
Maria's Kit of Comfort

MEET OUR TEAM



MIRIAM

Miriam Erbaugh is the Children and Youth Peace Formation Organizer for On Earth Peace (OEP) and the Editor-in-Chief of Agape Magazine. Outside of her internship, Miriam is a student at Manchester University. She loves to cook, hike, read, and spend time with her friends and family!



MARIE & MORGAINNE

Marie Benner-Rhoades is one of the co-Directors at On Earth Peace and focuses on youth and young adult peace formation. She appreciates the opportunity to have in-depth conversations with her kids based on the articles. Morgaine, age 12, is our child editor. Her favorite part of the magazine is Orby & Sib!



VALERIE

Valerie is excited to step into her new role as the Graphic Design intern at OEP. Val enjoys anything art, music, and spending time with her friends; she also has a passion for travel and has started to get into fashion :)



SYDNEY

Sydney is a Director OEP. For several years, she has worked as an educator for children in various programs and schools. In her free time, she enjoys cafe-hopping, traveling and learn new languages.



JOHN

John Kinsel has worked with children as a teacher, mental health counselor, consultant and Children's Disaster Services volunteer for over 45 years.



WENDY

Wendy is a wife, mom, friend, and graduate of both Manchester College (now University) and Bethany Theological Seminary. She is constantly thinking about what it means to live out what she says and believes.



KYLI

Kyli is a Health Education major with a concentration in Community Health and a minor in Psychology at Morgan State University who is passionate about equity, justice, and community well-being. She currently serves as OEP's Kingian Nonviolence Training Intern, where she supports peacebuilding education and community engagement initiatives.

CITATIONS & DESIGN CREDITS

"A Charmed Life: The story of Worry Dolls" 2019. BBC News. May 08, 2019.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p078mq3n>

Kingian Nonviolence Principle One: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.

Kingian Nonviolence Principle Five: Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence.

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AGAPE

**April showers bring
May flowers & a new
edition of Agape!**

