



## Books That Have Shaped My Understanding of Grief

Grief touches the mind, body, and nervous system. These books have helped shape my understanding of loss, healing, and the ways we learn to carry grief while continuing to live.

### Start Here

#### **Megan Devine** — *It's OK That You're Not OK*

A compassionate book that challenges the idea that grief is something we should move past. Devine reminds readers that grief is a natural response to love and loss and that what grieving people most often need is understanding and permission to feel what they feel.

#### **Mary-Frances O'Connor** — *The Grieving Brain*

Neuroscientist Mary-Frances O'Connor explains how the brain processes loss and why grief can feel so disorienting. Her research shows that grief is part of how the brain gradually learns the reality of absence after deep attachment.

#### **Thich Nhat Hanh** — *No Mud, No Lotus*

A gentle introduction to mindfulness and the relationship between suffering and healing. This book offers simple practices that help people remain present with difficult emotions while allowing moments of peace to emerge.

### Additional Books on Grief, Trauma, and the Body

#### **David Kessler** — *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*

Explores how meaning can gradually emerge after loss. Meaning does not replace grief but can help people continue living while honoring those they love.

#### **Mary-Frances O'Connor** — *The Grieving Body*

Examines the physical effects of grief, including sleep, stress, and immune function, and explains why caring for the body is an important part of healing.



**Bessel van der Kolk — *The Body Keeps the Score***

A widely respected exploration of how trauma affects the brain and body and why body-based practices can support recovery.

**Peter Levine — *Waking the Tiger***

Introduces somatic approaches to trauma healing and explains how gentle body awareness can help release stress stored in the nervous system.

**Stephen Porges — *Polyvagal Safety***

Explains polyvagal theory and how the nervous system continually scans for safety or danger, shaping emotional and physical responses.

**Jon Kabat-Zinn — *Wherever You Go, There You Are***

A clear and accessible introduction to mindfulness practices that support awareness, compassion, and emotional resilience.

*Grief is not something to solve or fix. These books simply offer perspectives and practices that may support you as you learn to carry loss while continuing to live.*