

Sacred Grief: Exploring a New Dimension to Grief

Leslee Tessmann

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Reviewed by Irene Watson for Reader Views (2/08)

This simple, yet extremely powerful book, presents a gentle way to discover within oneself a path of recovery from loss, be it from death or any other loss. Tessmann's tender words resonate throughout the book, leading the reader to a place of healing and direction to move forward with life.

Tessmann starts off with her own story, a story of struggle with the losses through death: family, friends, and a pet dog. But, there were other losses in her life; her daughter to substance addiction, husbands through divorces, and a job. Her final loss that brought her to re-discover herself was the loss of her father.

Through re-discovering herself, and coming to terms with grief, Tessmann was able to create a relationship with grief. This becomes the first step she advocates and gives simple explanations and steps on how to create this relationship. Tessmann says "...our initial reaction to finding ourselves in this process might be fear, anger, or dread." She further claims that often our relationships to grief are based on our own "myths and critical assessments" therefore causing us to refrain from addressing our issues. With clarity and gentleness, Tessmann guides the readers into thinking of their own situation, their own adversity to embracing grief, and moving past the false beliefs and fears, and finally creating a healthy relationship with grief, making it, as she calls it "Sacred Grief."

For me this was a book, although only 172 pages, that took a long time to get through. The writing is uncomplicated, yet I felt like the author was right there with me, telling me of her experience, and tenderly encouraging me to look at my own grief. I've been through a variety of techniques in the past to move me into and through dealing with my grief, but never in a way Tessmann's book did. I felt the study guide was very essential to help me through the process and I encourage every reader to stop after every chapter and contemplate the questions, seek the answers within, and then move to the next chapter. This is a must to truly experience the potential "Sacred Grief" has.

I highly recommend this book to anyone that has experienced any type of loss in their lives and is willing to look at the loss through a different set of eyes. Tessmann, in "Sacred Grief," will lead the reader to a place of compassion for oneself, create a relationship with his/her own grief, and ultimately create a place of understanding and a healed soul.