

# Understanding the Impact of Losing Your Mother

## *A Gentle Healing Journey*

### A Gentle Guide to Healing Grief

Each exercise walks you through a process of understanding the impact of losing your mother as you begin to gently heal the pain living in your heart.



### My First Memory

This is the very beginning of your healing journey and you will start with a reflective exercise. It is here that you will explore the very first memory of your mother and the feelings associated to that memory. This may be a painful memory or a happy memory, the idea is to go with the first memory that shows up in your psyche. You are searching for the link between the memory and how you are currently experiencing your grief, as you begin to recognise the similarities.

# Understanding My Grief Symptoms

You will get to know and understand your grief symptoms and how they are impacting your well-being and life in general. This is another reflective exercise that allows you to go into your mind, and body. You will explore these symptoms more deeply through the eyes of love and compassion rather than judgement. Our grief symptoms can certainly take a huge toll on our physical well-being, so understanding them and honouring them can be a very empowering experience.

## Denying My Grief

Most of us have denied aspects of our grief which can escalate our pain. You will become aware of the parts of you that you have denied and rejected and how this has impacted your overall well-being. We deny ourselves so much when we are grieving, especially the opportunity to express our feelings openly. We are afraid to express ourselves in fear of judgement, so we deny ourselves of our feelings. You will learn how to hold a tremendous amount of compassion for yourself once you understand the impact of denying.



## Recognising My Feelings

You will get to know your feelings by naming and acknowledging them. Once they are acknowledged, you can then honour them as a part of your grief journey. So many of us are riddled with feelings and often can't give words to the feelings that are swimming inside our body. This beautiful and reflective exercise will open your heart to exploring your genuine grief feelings as you give permission to experience any feeling that is showing up in your life.

## I Safely Express My Anger

Most of us feel anger at some point during our grief journey. This reflective exercise allows you to get to know the anger that you have experienced during your grief journey and express it constructively, without causing harm to you or anyone else. So many of us hang on to anger and it literally eats away at us. Understanding our anger gives us the power to take charge of our own life as we honour our feelings of anger as part of our unique grief experience.

## Anger and others

You will become aware of those that have angered you during your grief journey from a place of awareness and understanding. You will begin to learn that not everyone has the ability to hold a safe space for someone who is grieving a significant loss, like losing your mother. Some people are so afraid of upsetting you, that they prefer to abandon you instead. They don't do this to hurt you, they do it to protect themselves and to protect you. Through exploring your anger of other, it will help you gain a great deal of insight. You will no longer have to hang on to the anger. You will free yourself from anger, which makes more room for you to connect more deeply to your mother and your overall grief experience.

## The Importance of Trust

Trusting someone with our feelings is such a beautiful and honouring experience. You will get to know who you can and can't trust with your feelings. We have to remember that not everyone has the ability to hold space for our grief feelings and expression and we have to accept this with grace. This reflective exercise is so empowering because it allows you to look at those around you through the eyes of compassion, rather than frustration. You will get to know who you can trust with your feelings; and acknowledge this as a true gift from one human being to another.



## Saying Hello to My Sadness

This is a body awareness exercise where you will get to know the sadness that is living inside your body. You will honour your sadness and understand it more deeply. Your sadness is desperate to be acknowledged and the moment you acknowledge it, the sadness is then gifted by having a voice and being heard. Sadness is such a significant part of our grieving process and for many of us it is the primary grief experience. When someone describes how they feel after losing someone they love, they usually say "I am sad" or "I feel sad". Give your sadness permission to be expressed fully.

## My Unresolved Sadness

Grief can trigger our unresolved sadness that has been neglected and denied for years. We don't intentionally ignore the events/situations that have caused us sadness in the past, we just sometimes find it hard to deal with the pain that is showing up, so avoiding it is just so much easier. This reflective exercise will help you to get to know some of the unresolved sadness of the past that is still living inside you and unfortunately exaggerating your current grief experience. This truly is a powerful exercise that will create a new level of self-awareness. It offers you an opportunity to heal some of the sadness from your past that has been craving your attention for a very long time.



## Living with Loneliness

This is a body awareness exercise where you will get to know the loneliness that is living inside your body, honour it and then express it. Loneliness for most of us feels very intense and can be quite overwhelming. It feels like an emptiness that is hard to put into words, there is no language for the loneliness. When we go within, it allows us to feel, acknowledge and honour how loneliness found its way into our body. This beautiful and honouring exercise will help you nurture the loneliness in a gentle and loving way.

## Subtle Self-Soothing

Self-Soothing is such an important part of the grieving process. You will be given lots of self-soothing techniques that you can introduce into your life to help nurture your overall well-being while you are grieving the loss of your mother. We often forget to take care of ourselves while we are grieving because we become so overwhelmed by the grief. This kind and nurturing exercise, you will find very beneficial to your mental, physical and psychological well-being. It will encourage and inspire you to continue your self-soothing practices throughout the rest of the healing journey.

## Inner Child Poetry

We all have an inner child that needs our attention and we never want to neglect this aspect of self. Losing our mother will definitely expose the wounded inner child. The child part of us needs to be acknowledged during the grief experience because he or she hurts too. Your sweet inner child will write a poem to his or her mother, so they too, are given the opportunity to express their feelings of loss.



## What I Most Loved About My Mum

This is a beautiful and heartfelt exercise where you get to remember, acknowledge and write in your journal what you most loved about your mother. It's a great way of remembering and honouring the beauty that she brought into your life. There is so much to love about her. There are so many memories tucked away in our heart and by remembering the memories, we begin to understand and normalise why the impact of losing her was so incredibly painful.

## The Impact of My Mother's Death

This is probably the most painful exercise in the entire healing journey, but it's probably the one that will help you make sense of your felt experience. In this reflective exercise you will spend some time remembering how your mother died. It will be very painful to remember. Remembering will inform you of how her death is impacting you on a daily basis. It will teach you about the deep sadness living inside you based on how she died. The way someone dies, can have a huge impact on how we grieve. Most often we want to forget the pain of how our loved one died, yet forgetting can cause more pain.



## What I Miss About My Mum

There is so much to miss about your mother. You will explore all the things that you miss about her. This will help normalise your grief and become aware of why you feel so overwhelmed by her loss. There is so much to miss about her. As you go within and understand the many reasons you miss her, everything starts to make a little bit more sense.

## My Survival Strategies

This awareness exercise will give you some insight into the survival strategies that have helped you cope with the loss of your mother. For example: alcohol use, withdrawing from people and avoiding our feelings. You will gain knowledge of whether these survival strategies are helping you or hindering you. Often, they are hindering you and by learning this, you will begin to shift your mindset from survival into compassion and understanding. Survival is an avoidance tactic, yet the more we avoid the pain, the more pain we feel.

## The Power of Poetry

Poetry is such a beautiful expression of feelings. You will get to write a poem to your mother from your adult self. It may be a poem that tells her how much you miss her or it might be a poem that expresses the deep grief living inside you now that she is gone. This is your poem and you get to write/say whatever you wish to express to her.

## The Hurting Heart

This beautiful awareness exercise takes you into your heart. Your heart is in so much pain and has so much to say. The unspoken words of the heart are finally spoken. Our heart is where we hold a tremendous amount of our pain and it literally hurts. Honouring the pain in your heart will provide some gentle relief from the overwhelming feelings that reside there.



## Understanding My Triggers

We all get triggered when we are grieving the loss of a loved one, especially around times of anniversaries. A trigger will set off a memory and take you back to that time of the event, where you will experience an emotional state that can be quite distressing. This informative awareness exercise allows you to explore the triggers that show up in your life and how they impact your overall grief experience. Triggers remind us that the feelings of loss are still very much alive inside us.

## Remembering My Mother

When we lose someone we love we somehow remember all of the sad memories, the ones that make our heart ache. This gentle and sacred exercise is about recalling the beautiful memories of your mother, the memories that warm your hurting heart. You get to recall the special moments that filled your heart with so much love, the events that made your heart smile and the memories that are forever living inside you. In your special journal, you will write down all of the beautiful memories of her and for the first time in a long time, your heart will begin to feel warmth.

## Tears That Tell A Story

Crying is a powerful expression of emotions. Our tears tell us so much. This exercise allows your tears to be given a voice. What are your tears telling you about your grief and loss? Crying is just one way that we express our grief. Often our tears are filled with so many memories and emotions that need to be expressed. These memories and emotions are fuelled with so much intensity, that the only way to release them is through tears. Let your tears tell you all about the grief of losing your precious mother.

## Signs of Poor Self-Care

Grief is exhausting and can take a toll on our mind, body and spirit. When we grieve intensely, we get lost in our feelings and emotions and we forget to take care of ourselves. This is a normal response to grief. This awareness exercise will inform you of how poor-self-care is affecting your overall well-being. You will learn that the long-term consequences of poor self-care can be devastating.



## Self-Care Tips and Practices

Self-care is so important when we are grieving because grief can take such a toll on our overall well-being. This awareness exercise will introduce you to self-care tips and encourage you to take action towards better self-care. When we take care of ourselves, we reduce the risk of serious health implications and it can facilitate small boosts of energy that is required when our body is overwhelmed by grief.

## Dare to Dreams

Most of us dream about our loved one after they have died. Sometimes the dream is very upsetting and other times it's so beautiful to see them again. In the exercise you will recall a dream or many dreams that you have had about your mother and look for the deeper meaning in the dream. You will journal the dream, sit in contemplation and gain the awareness and message that has come for you.

## Honouring the Darkness Within Ritual

Grief can bring an aspect of darkness to our life. It might be your mother's funeral, the lack of support from family and/or friends, loneliness, anxiety or it may be just living your life without your mother. This ritual takes you into your body, exploring the darkness living inside you, followed by evoking love and light in an attempt to bring gentle healing to the shadows.

## I listen to my body (Body Awareness)

This full body awareness exercise will inform you of how your body is responding to the loss of your loved one. Once you have gained the awareness, you will then ask your body what it needs. For example, your body may want more sleep or more exercise. It may need to relax more. It may need healthier food and lots of water. It may want a long hot bath. Your body will tell you what it needs, if you listen to it. It truly is a beautiful way of honouring your body.



## Imagining Heaven

Losing someone you love hurts a lot, yet the idea that they are resting peacefully in the arms of God or in Heaven can offer some respite and healing. This exercise is to explore how you imagine your Mother in Heaven. Who is she with? Is she surrounded by love and peace? Is she an angel now? Is she happy there? Is she pain free? This exercise is designed to offer you some peace and tranquillity and bring you some relief in knowing that your mother is somewhere on the other side, no longer in pain and feeling content and peaceful with those that left before her.

## My Letter to Heaven

The last day is the most beautiful of all. You get to write a loving and heartfelt letter to your dearest mother in heaven. You will write the letters as if they will receive it in heaven. This is a beautiful and symbolic way of connecting with your Mother. Telling her how you feel. You may even tell her all about the healing journey and how it has helped you gain so much awareness of the impact of her loss. Your mother may be in heaven, but she lives in your heart forever.