A GENTLE JOURNALLING GUIDE

Mapping Your Grief

A space to name what you’re grieving, explore what you’re carrying, and listen to what still feels unspoken.

YOUR STORY

There is no right way through.

Take what you need. Leave what you don’t. Return whenever you’re ready.

Before you begin

Grief is not a straight line, and it is rarely just one feeling. It can touch your identity, your relationships, your body, your routines, your hopes for the future, and the way you understand the world.

This guide is an invitation, not an assignment. You do not need to complete every page or answer every question. You can write a few words, draw, pause, skip a prompt, or come back another day.

A few gentle reminders

• There is no correct order for grief. You may move between feelings, memories, and questions.

• You can grieve a person, a relationship, a role, a future you imagined, a sense of safety, or a version of yourself.

• You are allowed to feel more than one thing at once: love and anger, relief and sadness, gratitude and regret.

• If a prompt feels too big, make it smaller. Write one sentence. Take a breath. Stop if you need to.

A small check-in

As I begin this page, I notice…

What would help me feel a little more supported while I write?

You might choose a quiet place, a warm drink, a trusted person nearby, or a time limit. If writing brings up more than you can comfortably hold, pause and reach out to someone you trust or a qualified support professional.

Your grief map

Think of your grief as a landscape with many paths. Some are familiar; others may be difficult to name. There is no need to explore every path today.

WHAT I'M GRIEVING The losses I can name—and the ones that are harder to explain.	**WHAT I'M CARRYING** Responsibilities, emotions, memories, and expectations.
WHAT HAS CHANGED My identity, relationships, routines, and sense of the future.	**WHAT FEELS UNSPOKEN** The thoughts, questions, and feelings I may keep inside.
WHAT SUPPORTS ME People, practices, places, and moments of steadiness.	**WHAT I WANT TO CARRY FORWARD** Love, meaning, values, and small possibilities.

Start wherever your attention goes. You can use the pages that follow in any order.

A word, image, colour, or symbol for how grief feels today:

If my grief could show me a place on this map, it would lead me toward…

1. What I’m grieving

Some losses are visible to others. Some are private, complicated, or difficult to explain. Naming a loss does not make it smaller; it can simply help you acknowledge that it matters.

What—or whom—am I grieving?

What parts of this loss do other people see? What parts might they not see?

What has ended, changed, or become uncertain?

What did I hope would happen that now feels different?

What do I miss in an ordinary moment of the day?

You do not have to justify why something hurts. If it matters to you, it belongs on your map.

2. What I’m carrying

Grief can ask us to carry many things at once: practical responsibilities, emotional weight, other people’s expectations, and the effort of getting through an ordinary day.

What responsibilities or decisions feel heavier right now?

Which emotions have been taking up the most space?

What am I holding for other people, as well as for myself?

What do I feel I should be doing, feeling, or managing?

What could I set down, share, postpone, or ask for help with—even briefly?

A small permission slip

I am allowed to _____.

I do not have to _____ today.

3. What has changed

Loss can change the shape of daily life and the way we see ourselves. This page makes room for those changes without asking you to decide what they mean yet.

What feels different about who I am or how I move through the world?

Which routines, relationships, places, or milestones feel changed?

What parts of my life feel unfamiliar now?

What do I wish others understood about the changes I’m living with?

Is there a part of myself I am trying to reconnect with—or learning to know differently?

4. What feels unspoken

Some thoughts are hard to say out loud. You may worry about being misunderstood, upsetting someone, or sounding different from what people expect. Here, you can be honest without needing to edit yourself.

What have I wanted to say but haven’t found the words for?

What am I afraid people might misunderstand about my grief?

Are there questions I keep returning to, even without answers?

Is there anger, guilt, relief, resentment, regret, or another feeling I find difficult to admit?

If I could speak freely and be met with kindness, I would say…

You are not required to share what you write. This page can remain yours.

5. What supports me

Support does not have to make grief disappear. Sometimes it helps you feel accompanied, understood, or a little more able to meet the next moment.

Who helps me feel safe enough to be honest?

Where or when do I feel even a small sense of steadiness?

What has helped before, even in a small way?

What kind of support do I need more of—and what kind is not helpful?

What is one specific thing I could ask someone to do?

My support plan for a difficult day

A person I can contact:	
A place I can go:	
Something grounding I can try:	
One gentle next step:	

6. What I want to carry forward

Making room for life alongside grief does not mean leaving love behind or moving on from what mattered. You may discover ways to carry memories, values, and connection with you.

What do I want to remember, protect, or honour?

What did this relationship, experience, or chapter teach me about what matters?

What parts of my loved one, my past, or my former hopes live on in me?

What small thing would I like to make room for in the days ahead?

What does moving forward mean to me—if I choose those words at all?

A letter I may or may not send

You might write to the person you miss, to the life you expected, to the part of yourself that is hurting, or to grief itself. There is no need to make the letter neat, complete, or fair.

Dear _____,

With care,

Closing gently

Before you close this guide, take a moment to notice where you are. You do not need to feel better, have clarity, or find a lesson. Being here is enough.

What feels a little clearer after writing?

What still feels tender, unfinished, or unanswered?

What do I need in the next hour?

One kind thing I can offer myself today is…

A note to myself

My grief is allowed to take the time it takes. I can meet it one moment at a time.

Date: _____ Today, I want to remember: _____

You can return to this map and add to it as your experience changes. Some paths may become easier to walk; others may remain tender. Your grief does not need to follow a schedule.

If grief feels overwhelming or is making it difficult to manage day-to-day life, consider reaching out to a trusted person, counsellor, or other qualified professional. You deserve support.