

Summer Reading List for Adults

Summertime and reading often go hand-in-hand. While it might be a good time for some escapist novel, adding to your knowledge bases, or a good old cathartic cry might be just what you're looking for this summer. To help inspire you, we collected some of the books our Christi Center team find inspiring, helpful, or resonant.

Helping Bereaved Children: A Handbook for Practitioners, edited by Nancy Boyd Webb

Even though this book is written for those working with grieving children, it's accessible and a great all-around text for those who many come into contact with those children, like parents or teachers

Why is God Laughing: The Path to Joy and Spiritual Optimism by Deepak Chopra

A slightly irreverent, sarcastic and funny look at how to not only be okay with the obstacles we face in life, but how to grow from them.

Transcending Loss: Understanding the Lifelong Impact of Grief and How to Make It Meaningful by Ashley Davis Prend, ACSW

Making meaning in grief and how to grow into your "new normal."

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion

A clear and unflinching account of the changes, sometimes minute by minute, that can happen as we journey through grief.

How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies by Therese A. Rando, PhD

a primer on what to expect from grief, the effects of grief and potential triggers. While written by a clinician, the language is easily accessible and thorough.

Life After Death: The Burden of Proof by Deepak Chopra

A blend of current science and Chopra's signature way of writing about spirituality.

Wild by Cheryl Strayed

Author's recollections of the lengths we will go to go find ourselves after loss.

The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly

A young adult novel about mourning, not only of a loved one, but mourning the life we no longer have.

The Loss That Is Forever by Maxine Harris

A book containing stories from 66 interviewees conducted by the author. The sample interviewees all were self-selected and had one thing in common; they had all lost a parent in childhood, (0 -18 years of age). While the group of interviewees was in no way a scientific sampling, the author did an excellent job compiling and documenting pertinent information gathered from the interviews and focusing the book on the lifelong impact of losing a parent in childhood. The idea that this is an experience that will stay with someone for a lifetime is thoroughly explored and captured in this book, through chapters about the actual event itself, the surviving parent, creating the self, adult milestones (relationships, parenting), mortality, and acts of repair.

Nothing was the Same: a Memoir by Kay Redfield Jamison, Non-Fiction. Read in the first two years of the loss of my husband. She is the premier authority on bi-polar disorder, herself bi-polar, and she wrote a wonderful book on suicide called **Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide**. It was interesting in the distinctions she made between grief and depression. And, she tried so hard to find comfort in literature, ritual and writing.

Hannah Coulter by Wendell Berry. Fiction. Read in 4th year of widowhood and found amazingly healing. The wisdom of this book cannot be underestimated. Widowed twice, Hannah goes on with such honesty and insight. I think it an extremely healing book, but I am not sure it could have been so healing for me in the beginning.

Stitches: A Handbook on Meaning, Hope and Repair, by Anne Lamott. Anne Lamott, one of my favorite authors, writes about real stuff for real people! This book poses the question, how do we stitch back the fabric of our lives after it has been shredded by catastrophe? In her unique style of down to earth humor and witty wisdom, she explores how we find meaning in dark times, how we recapture spiritual wholeness after loss....one stitch at a time.

Continuing Bonds, by Dennis Klass. Though written by a prominent researcher in the field of bereavement, this book is written for the lay person.... for anyone who has experienced a loss and finds it unnaturally difficult to simply “let go”. It quietly questions previously dominant models of grief and suggests that instead of detaching from our deceased loved ones, it may be more healing to find healthy ways to continue a relationship with them, as other cultures often do.

Healing into Life and Death, by Steven Levine. Steven Levine’s writings have long been a shining light to me in the dark nights of my soul. He and his wife have worked closely throughout past decades with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, as well as Ram Dass and many others who have left valuable footprints in the field of death and dying, and the field of spirituality and consciousness. This book offers original ways of bringing in loving kindness to ourselves while working with our pain.



When Children Grieve, by John James, Russell Friedman, and Leslie Landon Matthews.

This book offers adults innovative ways of helping children with experiences with loss. Leslie Landon is the late Michael Landon's daughter.

Naked, by David Sedaris.

After spending most of this collection of short stories describing humorous anecdotes from his youth, Sedaris's last story describes the illness and death of his mother, while never losing the humor, a lot of love and grief is presented. Sedaris also describes the aftermath of his youngest sister's suicide in this New Yorker article: "[Now We Are Five](#)", and comparing Sedaris' responses to the two deaths are interesting for their similarities and differences.

After Visiting Friends, by Michael Hainey.

After he died, silence descends. Silence and fear. My twin poles: my binary black holes. I live in fear of upsetting my mother, of even uttering my father's name. I believe that even by saying his name, I might kill her. Or she might kill me.

A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis

Because of its raw honesty.

Good Grief by Granger E. Westberg

For the person who is limited in concentration, this one is a step-by-step walk-through of grief. The easiest tool for someone who is having a hard concentration block. It's a layman's book for grief, and this short book ends on a positive note.

Best Grief Articles

Mark Epstein, "[The Trauma of Being Alive](#)", New York Times, August 3, 2013. Buddhist psychologist, who says that you just don't get over it.

Ashley Davis Bush, "[Grief Intelligence: A Primer](#)". She has also written a book, **Transcending Loss**, states there is no timetable for grief, one is changed, but one can transcend it in touching others