



I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One

By Brook Noel, Pamela D Blair

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Now there is a hand to hold...

Each year about eight million Americans suffer the death of someone close to them. Now for those who face the challenges of sudden death, there is a hand to hold, written by two women who have experienced sudden loss. This updated edition of the best-selling bereavement classic will touch, comfort, uplift and console. Authors Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair, Ph.D. explore sudden death and offers a comforting hand to hold for those who are grieving the sudden death of a loved one.

Featured on ABC World News, Fox and Friends and many other shows, this book acts as a touchstone of sanity through difficult times. *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* covers such difficult topics as the first few weeks, suicide, death of a child, children and grief, funerals and rituals, physical effects, homicide and depression. New material covers the unique circumstances of loss, men and women's grieving styles, religion and faith, myths and misunderstandings, *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* reflects the shifting face of grief.

These pages have offered solace to over eighty thousand people, ranging from seniors to teenagers and from the newly bereaved to those who lost a loved one years ago. Individuals engulfed by the immediate aftermath will find a special chapter covering the first few weeks.

Tapping their personal histories and drawing on numerous interviews, authors Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair, Ph.D, explore unexpected death and its role in the cycle of life. *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* provides survivors with a rock-steady anchor from which to weather the storm of pain and begin to rebuild their lives.

PRAISE FOR I WASN'T READY TO SAY GOODBYE

"I highly recommend this book, not only to the bereaved, but to friends and

counselors as well."

Helen Fitzgerald, author of *The Grieving Child*, *The Mourning Handbook*, and *The Grieving Teen*

"This book, by women who have done their homework on grief... can hold a hand and comfort a soul through grief's wilderness. Outstanding references of where to see other help."

George C. Kandle, Pastoral Psychologist

"Finally, you have found a friend who can not only explain what has just occurred, but can take you by the hand and lead you to a place of healing and personal growth. Whether you are dealing with the loss of a family member, a close personal associate or a friend, this guide can help you survive and cope, but even more importantly... heal."

The Rebecca Review

"For those dealing with the loss of a loved one, or for those who want to help someone who is, this is a highly recommended read."

Midwest Book Review

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

Pamela D. Blair, Ph.D., is the author of *The Next Fifty Years* and coauthor, with Brook Noel, of *You're Not Alone*.

Brook Noel is the author or coauthor of many books on a variety of topics, including *The Make Today Matter Makeover*, *The Change Your Life Challenge*, *The Single Parent Resource*, and *400 Rush Hour Recipes*.

Ellen Archer is an acclaimed audiobook narrator and winner of the coveted Audie Award for *For the Love of a Dog* by Patricia B. McConnell, PhD.

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Excerpt from Chapter Two: Notes for the First Few Weeks

"And people answered the phone for me.

And people cooked for me.

And people understood for me.

My dearest friends cared for me

when I didn't care."

- Wendy Feiereisen

At this moment, in the direct aftermath of losing someone tragically, there is so little anyone can say. We cannot find the words to offer you peace - though we wish it were a gift we could give you. We promise you now that we will give you everything we can to help you make your way through this. We will help you wind a path through the haze, the confusion, and the pain that is gripping at your core.

For the first few weeks, do not concern yourself with what you will do, where you will go, or what lies in the future. For now, we ask that you simply follow the guidelines in this chapter. There will be time to cope, to understand, to process - later. Right now, you simply need to take care of you.

Treat Yourself as if You Were in Intensive Care

You are in the process of going through one of the most traumatic experiences a person can endure. The challenges you have already faced, both physically and mentally, will leave you vulnerable, exhausted, and weak. It is imperative that you focus directly on yourself and on any dependents. Find ways to get your needs met first in these few weeks.

In the first week or so you will probably feel stunned and overwhelmed. You may also feel numb or hysterical. Your emotional system shuts down, providing temporary insulation from the full impact of your loss. You will go through the motions; it will look like you're coping well sometimes.

In her book, *The Worst Loss*, Barbara D. Rosof writes, "In shock you may be unable to move or speak coherently; people report that they cannot think. Shock responses may also be active and intense; you may have screamed, or run from the room, or physically attacked the bringer of the news. All of these behaviors are means of shutting down, or distancing yourself from a reality that you do not yet have a way to deal with. As you look back, your behavior may seem bizarre and totally out of character for you. Remember that your entire world had been knocked out from under you. You were in free fall, and your first task was to find any way to stop the fall."

When the funeral is over and your relatives and friends have gone home, the shock begins to wear off. It is important not to make any decisions that will have a lasting impact on your life (for example, sell the house, give away the person's belongings, etc.) while you are in shock.

Expect to Be Distracted

During the first few weeks, your mind will be filled with racing thoughts and unfamiliar emotions. Many people report having difficulty with simple tasks. Losing one's keys, forgetting where you are while driving, and sluggish reaction time are all commonly reported problems. With everything you are mentally and physically trying to process, it's normal to be distracted. Take special caution. Try to avoid driving and other activities where these symptoms may cause injury.

Have Someone Near You

If possible, choose a close friend to keep near you through the first week or two. Let this person help you make decisions, hear your fears or concerns, and be the shoulder for you to lean on. Give them a copy of this book. Later, as you move through the grieving process, it will be very helpful to have someone who has "been there" and understands thoroughly what you are talking about.

Accept the Help of Friends

Our energy is so depleted in the first few weeks after loss, it's hard to even ask for help. We have included a handout at the end of this chapter that can be photocopied freely and given to your inner circle of friends and relatives. You may be reluctant to do this, but please do. Even if we don't think we need people right now, we do indeed. Brook shares her story of friendship . . .

"When I lost my brother, my friend Sara was my anchor. I never asked her to come over that evening but as soon as she heard, she came (even though I told her there was nothing she could do). She simply sat next to me. Then she went upstairs and packed my bag for the upcoming week. She hugged me when I needed it and sat in the other room when I needed to be alone. To this day, her warm presence brings tears to my eyes. It was an extension of love and caring like few I have known."

If, like Brook, you are too grief-ridden to ask for help, simply show friends this book and let them read these few pages so they have an idea of what you need and how to support you. Friends want to help, but they rarely know how. The cycle of your grief will be more bearable when you hold the hand of a friend. Reach out. The following two entries summarize beautifully what those who face grief need from the people around them.

*"I'll cry with you,"
she whispered
"until we run out of tears.
Even if it's forever.
We'll do it together."*

*There it was . . . a simple
promise of connection.
The loving alliance of
grief and hope that
blesses both our breaking
apart and our coming
together again.*

Molly Fumia, Safe Passage

Needed: A strong, deep person wise enough to allow me to grieve in the depth of who I am, and strong enough to hear my pain without turning away.

I need someone who believes that the sun will rise again, but who does not fear my darkness. Someone who can point out the rocks in my way without making me a child by carrying me. Someone who can stand in thunder and watch the lightning and believe in a rainbow.

Fr. Joe Mahoney, Concerns of Police Survivors Newsletter

(This is excerpted from a beautiful book on grief titled Forever Remembered: Cherished messages of hope, love and comfort from courageous people who have lost a loved one. Compendium Publishing.)

Caring for Your Children

If you have small children, contact friends and relatives to help you care for them. Consider having someone stay with you for the specific task of caring for your children, since some children may be further traumatized by separation. In Chapter Nine we cover the specifics of children and grief. While it is human nature to want to help and care for others, we must understand at this trying time we will barely have enough energy to care for ourselves. Even if we want to help those around us, we won't have the resources. It's in our best interest to allow this time for our own grief.

Someone to Take Calls and Check Email

If the person who has died is of your immediate family, you will be receiving many phone calls, visitors, and cards. Have a friend come by to take messages, check emails, answer the door, and answer the phone. Most callers do not expect to speak directly with the family but simply wish to express their condolences. Have someone keep a notepad handy to record the names and messages of callers. Be forewarned, occasionally you may receive a strange call or a strange card.

Brook once took a message from a caller who offered condolences for the loss of her brother and then in a second breath requested a current picture of her daughter. Pam remembers a caller who said, "I'm sure George's death was easier for you, because you were divorced after all." These thoughts and comments are inappropriate and can be very hurtful, though the caller does not intend them to be. In our society, we just don't know how to handle grief and loss. People cope with grief differently - many people don't know how to cope at all. When you think of it, our world is geared toward gaining and acquiring; we have few lessons on how to handle loss. Occasionally people will ask a strange question or perhaps write a note in a card that seems a bit "out of place." Realize that this is not done to hurt you; these are just people who are inept at handling loss and the thought of loss.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jeff Williams:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book allowed I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have various other opinion?

Dorothy Roper:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not require people to be aware of each info they get. How many people to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading through a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information specifically this I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One book since this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred per-cent guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Gene Kirkland:

Typically the book I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you will get the point easily after perusing this book.

Elizabeth McNeal:

Is it you who having spare time subsequently spend it whole day through watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something new? This I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One can be the solution, oh how comes? A book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your free time by reading in this fresh era is common not a geek activity. So what these textbooks have than the others?

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