

Good Grief

navigating loss
with love

In loving memory of
Lee Horbachewski

GRIEF IS LOVE

Grief is just another word for love.

When we open our hearts to love, we know, at some point, our hearts will be broken open by loss.

Grief is not the end of love, it is love.

Through the ups and downs of life, Love is always an invitation for transformation.

A request to drop through the layers we have created to protect our hearts.

An opportunity to be known more deeply than we have before.

It's Love that makes us true.

My deepest hope is the playbook supports you in navigating whatever loss you are experiencing with as much love as you can.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "gemma". The lettering is cursive and fluid, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then loops back under the 'g'.

PS. Here is a good grief [playlist](#) to keep you company, as you grow through grief and navigate loss, with Love.

LOSS, IN ALL HER FORMS

Loss isn't limited to death.
Loss is part of life.

On the road of being alive, there are many endings.

Perhaps you're here because someone you love died.
Or maybe a marriage is coming to a close.
Or a friend has decided to transition away from you (or you from them).

Maybe a part of you has died, an old way of being is no longer needed.
Or maybe you feel like you've lost yourself and you're waiting to be found.

Perhaps there's a survival strategy you've outgrown and would like to leave behind.
An outdated habit or identity that you're grieving. A dream that died.

When we transition from being single, to having children, to launching children, we go through loss with each season.

Maybe you've lost a career or have chosen to leave a role or responsibility behind.
Perhaps retirement is beckoning and you're afraid to lose your sense of purpose.

The value system you once lived by may no longer fit, the community you felt belonging with may no longer feel aligned.

Maybe you're experiencing loss with something connected to your physical or mental health. Something you used to be able to do that you can no longer do.

Grief is essential for growing through all the transitions in our lives.

What loss are you navigating right now?
(hint: there may be many)

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

I'm navigating the loss of _____

TREASURE OF TRANSFORMATION

We are often taught to avoid loss.
To sidestep endings.
To swallow grief.
To get over it.

Time doesn't heal all wounds.
It is possible to get stuck in rumination.
Trauma can make our world smaller.

But, when we are patient (and intentional) with the healing process, we find the treasure of transformation hidden within the gifts of grief.

If your heart has been broken open by life, let's thoughtfully put it back together so it's bigger and stronger than it was before.

When you have healed from this loss, what is the story you want to tell about it?

If loss brings out our truest self, who do you want to be?

PRESENT WITH THE PAIN

There is another side to the pain you're feeling.
You will arrive in a place where there is less ache and more peace.

Until that happens, be gentle with yourself.
Healing can take time.

Grief might mess with your focus. If it's hard for you to concentrate, if you're feeling muddled, if you don't know where to put your attention, if you're not sure what to do now ... give yourself space to breathe and time to discover.

After loss, we need to completely redesign our future.
Take it one day, one hour, one minute at a time.
Give yourself permission to not know.
Focus on the next right step.

The path forward will be revealed as you walk it.

What is my next right step?

RESOURCE OVER NUMBING

It's tempting to numb, distract, or avoid the hurt that comes from healing.

Denying grief can complicate it.

We need to resource it to recover from it.

Provide yourself with inner or outer resources to support your healing.

- 1. Accept support.** Tell them what you need (if you don't know, tell them you don't know and ask them to surprise you).
- 2. Be patient with your process.** Breathing is healing. Walking in healing. Sleeping is healing.
- 3. Feel to heal.** Remember the memories. Write a letter. Dance to songs that evoke emotions. Stretch the places in your body where the ache lives. Tell all the stories to good listeners.
- 4. Comfort.** Soak in a steamy salty tub. Wrap yourself in a blanket. Sip a warm cup of tea. Light a candle and watch the flame. Drink cool water. Lean into someone you love. Show your body you are safe instead of telling your body you are safe. Nourish your body with healthy food. Stare at the sky. Watch the sunset.
- 5. Accept.** Trauma marks you. You will never be the same. The hard news is ... you cannot go back, who you are now is not who you were then. The good news is ... you cannot go back, who you are now is not who you were then. If it's going to hurt, it might as well change you for the good. You will emerge from this with more power, wisdom, and resilience.

RESOURCE OVER NUMBING

Everytime we circle the same feeling, same story, same memory, when we add a resource we create a healing spiral.



What are the inner resources will create your healing spiral?

What are the outer resources will create your healing spiral?

LESSONS IN LOSS

Invite loss to offer you insight.
Swallow the medicine of sorrow.

What are the lessons in this loss? What gifts are in this grief?

We will all fail to live forever.
The cradle that holds the preciousness of life is the fact that it ends.

What's the story you want to tell about loss ... and life?

IN CELEBRATION OF LEE



It is hard to talk about Lee in the past because she was so present in my life and in the world.

Lee was a passionate photographer and lover of nature. Every person who knew Lee had a story of how she connected them to a certain animal.

On one of our adventures into the wild, Lee shared her desire for a singular sense of purpose. After listening to her for a while, I shared how she reminded me of a hummingbird.

Hummingbirds are not singular. They move from flower to flower, nourishing themselves with the unique nectar of each, rubbing their face in the flower, gathering pollen, and flying to the next flower, cross-pollinating as they go.

The gardens of our world flourish because of our hummingbirds.

Lee did this for us.

When Lee connected with a passion, she fully immersed herself in it and learned everything she could. When she bonded with a person, she wanted to know the essence of that person, and through her compassion, empathy, and vulnerability – she did. If she was a hummingbird, I could see her enthusiastically rubbing her face all over who, and what, she loved. She pollinated a diverse community of good humans, creating a beautiful and diverse garden for us all to enjoy.

Lee lived a rich and full life. Her unique gifts spread far and wide. A few days after her death, someone on a beach in South Africa wrote one of her quotes on a chalkboard.

The words that were written were her wishes for us all.

Faith in times of darkness.

Hope in times of need.

Grace in times of failure.

Compassion in times of pain.

Courage in times of fear.

And, at all times, Love.

IN CELEBRATION OF LEE

Lee would write these three lines in every one of her books she signed.

You are not alone.
You are loved.
You belong.

Lee always went the extra mile for who, and what, she loved. After Lee died, I went through all the mementos and memories from Lee that were designed to remind me:

I am not alone.
I am loved.
I belong.

Unexpected cards in my mailbox, with her calligraphy-like handwriting.
Calendars filled with her stunning photos and heart-felt words
Books she gave me because she knew there was a particular message I needed.
Photos she captured because she knew that a certain animal would speak to my heart.
Even her half drank bottles of Coke leftover from our last adventure.

Through her generosity of creativity, time, energy, and attention Lee shared enough reminders that we are loved to fill us up for the rest of our lives.

For however many moments we had with Lee, we were graced with knowing we are loved. Even if we only held it for a moment, even if it came and went, even if it was across the land and sea, even if it didn't last as long as we wanted it to. It was love and it was real and it's ours to carry.

Even though our hummingbird is gone, she has left behind a garden of love that will continue to flourish as we take the Lessons from Lee, carry them in our hearts, and live them for the whole world to see.

GETTING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

I know there is a life that you desire for yourself, a life you love.

All my work in the world is to help you move from where you are now, to where you want to be. I have a whole lotta tools, techniques, and training to show you how to design, and live, a life you love.

I want to clarify where my online resources fit in your life and where you might need an extra helping hand to find your way through.

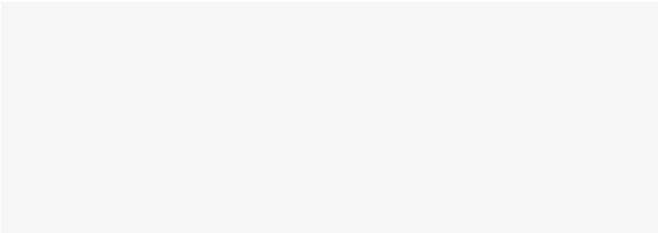
I know that, if you're out to create meaningful change in your life, it's probably because something is not working. At times, when life isn't working the way we want it to, our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can be difficult to sort through.

This playbook will offer up the tools to develop self-awareness, deepen your relationships with yourself and information about how to use the power of psychology to align more fully with the life you love.

Our playbooks are not a first line treatment for times when you're experiencing psychological distress. It isn't a substitute for face-to-face therapy or treatment from your medical professionals.

We all have bad days (because we are human and that's part of the gig) but there's a difference between a few bad days and a few bad months. If you are regularly struggling with your mental health, please seek professional support.

We are so glad you're here.
gem + the TLTL team



GRATITUDE

Feel free to share a section of this workbook, wherever you like.

Your blog, your book, all over your social channels, in your holiday greeting card – share it with friends, family, and students.

It's all good and I'm grateful for your help in spreading the love. Just use my full name and kindly link back to my website: ToLoveThisLife.com

If you'd like to publish the entirety of this workbook in a book, magazine, on a website, or any other platform – or if you'd like to use this worksheet in a commercial / for-profit context – please email gemma@tolovethislife.com to request permission first.

#pleaseandthankyou

WANT MORE?

We've got you covered...

If this workbook rocked your magnificent world, there's plenty more where that came from.

Three things you can do next:

Hop over to ToLoveThisLife.com and sign up for our weekly Love Letters – our take on a newsletter that's packed with inspiring true stories, psychological strategies, and a few of our favourite things.

Join our community at ToLoveThisLife.com where we offer courses to help you live a life you love and add love to life.

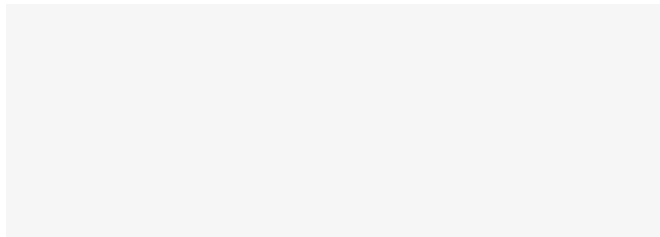
Prance over to your inbox pop gemma@tolovethislife.com into the address line and let me know if you have any questions. Also! If this workshop – or any of my work in the world – made your day, triggered an epiphany, or helped catapult you forward, tell me about it.

Here's our dream for you ...

... the freedom to do the things you want to do, follow-through on what matters most, keep your promises to yourself and feel proud that you are creating a life you love every day.

No one on earth can do what you do, in precisely the way that you do it. You are precious and our world needs your special brand of magic.

Thank you for being in our orbit.
Gemma + the TLTL Team



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gemma Stone is a psychology expert, neuroscientist, author, speaker, and lover of life. She is laser focused on helping people build emotional intelligence and resilience so they can navigate hard things and live a life they love.

Working in the field of psychology for over twenty-years, her formal training, degrees, certifications, and licenses range from psychology to executive coaching, to hypnotherapy, to neurolinguistic programming, to trauma processing and much more.

She is the author of [Your Great Life: a soulful and strategic guide to designing a life you love](#). In

addition to her one-on-one work with leaders, she creates courses for the community at To Love This Life, facilitates retreats in the Rocky Mountains and consults with organizations internationally.

When she's not working, you can find Gemma adventuring the world with her two Suns or curled up in a corner with a book, a journal, her favourite fountain pen, and a nibble of dark chocolate.