

*Essentials*



*for Grieving Well*



*by*

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*Grief, like people, comes in all shapes and sizes.*

*There is the poignant, heart-swelling kind of grief we have for a dear old friend who dies peacefully after a long decline. Then there is the heart-wrenching, life-wrecking kind that crashes down upon us like a tsunami, following the loss of a spouse or child. And of course there are many variations in between such as a parent or sibling or even a beloved pet. Depending on the nature of the relationships, these losses can unravel our world and leave us hurting for months and years. Each needs to be addressed and healed in its own special way.*

*The suggestions in this book are for anyone having difficulty facing the day without that special someone to make it right.*

*1. Remember to ...*



*Breathe*

*Grief can take your breath away!*

*Breathe deeply, slowly...*

*Notice the way it feels to fill your lungs.*

*Send the breath to different parts of you body:*

*heart    stomach    pelvis    feet    hands*

*Are there places that feel dead or numb? Breathe into those places relaxing and softening with an internal breath massage.*

*Breathe into your head.*

*Let the breath envelop your thoughts in a soft, cushy blanket.*

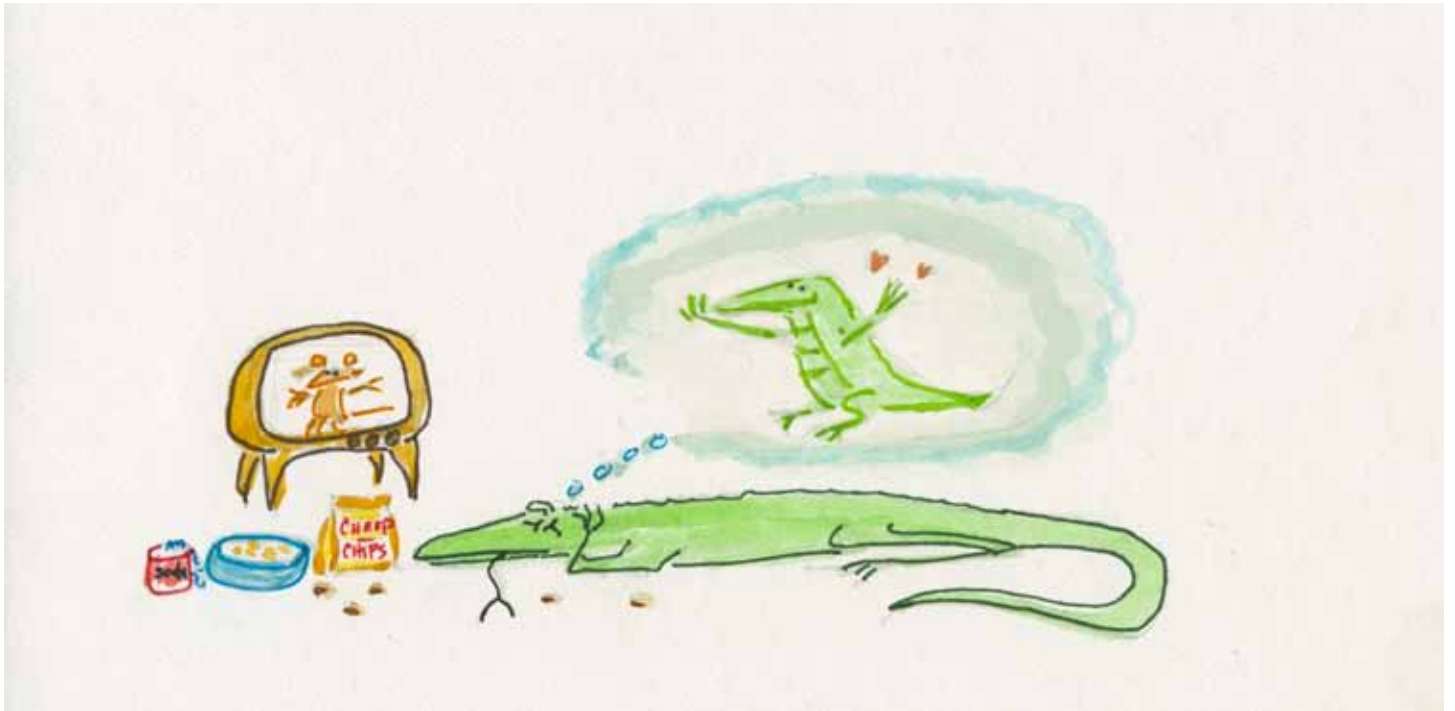
*In the moment  
let nothing exist  
but your breath.*

2. *Eat*

*sleep*

*Exercise*







# *Eat Well!*

*Grief feels much worse when you are running on empty.*

*Nutritious food can give you a big lift. It provides the fuel for rewiring your brain and healing your heart. Get the best food you can buy.*

*Eat regularly even when it seems tasteless or difficult to swallow. Focus. Take slow deliberate bites. Notice the texture. Feel it in your mouth and going down your throat. Pretend it is a magic potion. Which it is. Welcome its healing power.*

# *sleep*

*It is amazing how much better the world seems after a good night's sleep.*

*Take naps during the day if you have trouble sleeping at night. You may feel tired even after sleeping. This is not unusual.*

*You are going through a deep healing both physically and emotionally. As with surgery, let yourself rest.*

# *Exercise*

*Physical exertion create endorphines that make you feel better.*

*Get out of the house. A change of scenery can change your mood.*

*Take a walk in nature. There is healing power in the earth and trees. Pause and notice them. Beauty can heal the wounded soul.*

*Walk barefoot in soft grass. Lie in the sun and feel the heat on your face and body. Breath the air.*



### *3. Write!*

*Discover your story. Watch it change.*

*Write down your:*

*Feelings*

*Memories*

*Thoughts*

*Dreams.*

*Sometimes it may seem like you are going backwards. Grief does not progress in a straight line. It zig-zags back and forth between better and worse. You may always feel strong emotions about the one you lost. What changes is how often those feelings arise and how you cope with them. If you write it down you will see it.*

*Be Patient*

*You are a brand new being. Like the phoenix, a new you is emerging out of the ashes of your former life. It is a new birth. Birth comes with labor.*



*4. Tell Your Story.*



*storytelling has magical healing powers!*

*Talk to people you trust -- close friends, relatives, counselors. Describe what you need. Notice what it is like to be witnessed, acknowledged, understood, and confirmed.*

*Some will not be able to listen to you. Grief may rewrite your address book.*

*People who are going through grief themselves can be more understanding and more accepting. Consider joining a grief support group. If it is not right, try another one until you find the right fit.*

*5. Let Grief Inspire You.*



*Do something extraordinary!*

*Creative action activates the right side of the brain and taps into the unconscious as well as the heart.*

*Be Bold!*

*It can be very cathartic.*

*Think about the person you lost . . .*

*Let the ideas emerge on their own.*

*Did your loved-one express some final wish for you to accomplish?*

*What characteristic captures the essence of that person?*

*Do something that acknowledges who they were for you.*

*Celebrate your relationship. Express gratitude.*



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## Grief and Death Transformation Specialist

Through guided consultations, I help people transform loss into the discovery of a new life path. Pain, sorrow, confusion, low energy, lack of concentration, loneliness, and fear of the future are addressed by reenergizing the body, replacing limiting beliefs, and reigniting your purpose, creativity and passion. Through a variety of self-focusing tools such as breath, visualization, journaling, deamwork, tarot, voice, music, and art, I will guide you in releasing emotional suffering and embodying a more soul-affirming way of being.

Meetings are by phone or in person. To schedule a complimentary grief exploration session and discover your next steps toward reclaiming your life, contact me at: [mp@secretsoflifeanddeath.com](mailto:mp@secretsoflifeanddeath.com).

## Background

After receiving a Ph.D. in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Indiana University, Michelle taught at St. Mary's College in Winona, MN and worked as the director of a youth program on the Navajo Reservation in Ft. Defiance, AZ. For 25 years she studied with a Sufi master, originally from Baghdad. In response to the loss of her parents, she produced a three-part documentary series on death and transformation. She facilitates grief support groups and leads workshops on death and transformation throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, including Sutter's hospice in Emeryville, JFK University, and UCSF's Helen Diller Cancer Clinic. Her work is partly supported by a grant from the Lloyd Symington Foundation. She is certified by the American Grief Academy. Since the age of 11 she has been drawing the cartoon characters appearing in this book.

For more information  
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