

The
Grief
Series

ways to remember

creative activities to mark a loss

@GriefSeries
GriefSeries.co.uk



ARTWORK BY HAYLEY MILLS STYLES
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

Image by Matt Rogers



ELLIE HARRISON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THE GRIEF SERIES
GRIEF SERIES PART 7: ALL THAT LIVES

ways to remember

creative activities to mark a loss

This booklet offers creative strategies for expressing and processing bereavement and loss.

This is an invitation to embark upon your own journey. To take time to slow down. To spend some time reflecting. To spend some time with someone or something you have lost. It could be a person, a house, a job, a previous version of yourself..... whatever you feel comfortable with.

If my mum was alive now, we would spend time together. I would arrange to see her. But we don't always do that with people once they are dead. But what if we did? I still love and think about the people I have lost. But it is a loving in absence rather than a loving in presence. This is called a 'continuing bond'. My mum still has an impact on the way I live my life from day to day. I cook things that I learned from her. I inherited her love of beautiful illustrations as well as her distinctive nose.

Sometimes we can't attend funeral celebrations for people we love. Our loss might be recent or a long lasting sense of loss from something that happened in the past. We have activities that you can do at home, outside or when you can't attend a celebration.

The activities have come from over a decade of making artistic projects about loss with and for communities on **The Grief Series**. We have designed these activities in conversation with people from 5 to 95 years old and we have often used them as activities for workshops in community centres, places of worship, schools, pubs, museums and galleries.

I hope you find these activities meaningful. Warmest wishes from Ellie and 'Team Grief'.

To find out more about **The Grief Series** go to www.griefseries.co.uk.

#WaysToRemember



PERLE THE CARAVAN
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

contents

- 1 home shrines
- 2 journeys and places
- 3 memory stones
- 4 'bottle it up' letter writing
- 5 recipe card
- 6 memory tins

#WaysToRemember



HOME SHRINE WITH FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS & SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS
GRIEF SERIES PART 7: ALL THAT LIVES

home shrines

1

Making home shrines is something I have done instinctively for a long time. It inspired the caravan we transformed into a museum for **Grief Series Part 6: Journey With Absent Friends**. Each drawer and cupboard of our caravan housed a little shrine to a particular memory. A photo album arranged carefully on yellow fabric from my childhood next to drawings by my mum.

WHERE

Find a place or space for your shrine. Windowsills, mantelpieces and shelves can be good but there are no rules. Care and reflection are the most important ingredients. A carefully displayed walking stick in a hallway or a patch of wall in the bathroom might feel right.

WHAT

Consider what objects, colours, smells or textures you associate with the person or thing you have lost. It could be a shrine to a single person or photo wall of your ancestors. It could commemorate a chapter of your life or a role that was special to you.

For example you might choose a special hook to display a running medal from before you had your injury or you could drape the scarf you wore in hospital beautifully.

It's up to you if it's clear to visitors or has more of a hidden significance that only you know. You might spend time there or it might simply prompt a happy memory as you're on your way out the door.

SHARE

You are welcome to write about or photograph your home shrines and send to us at 18 Roundhay Grove, Leeds LS8 4DS. Email a picture or share with us on social media:
griefseries@gmail.com
[@GriefSeries](https://www.instagram.com/GriefSeries)

We've also discovered a lot about shrine making from our Mexican collaborators on **Grief Series Part 7: All That Lives**. In Mexico people build shrines called Ofrendas to remember the dead. They build Ofrendas in houses as well as public spaces in the run up to Dia De Los Muertos in October and November. To learn more, we have created a separate pack on the website telling you all about Mexican Ofrendas.

#WaysToRemember



LOOKING FOR THE MEMORY OF DAD WITH A VIEW OF GOATFELL MOUNTAIN
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

journeys and places

2

Where does the memory of the dead live? In a sacred space or aisle 22 of Tesco? This is adapted from **Grief Series Part 6 Journey With Absent Friends**. We handed this quote out along with pieces of Kendal Mint cake inviting people to go on their own journey:

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape. As I've already noted, not every bend does. Sometimes the surprise is the opposite one; you are presented with exactly the same sort of country you thought you had left behind miles ago. That is when you wonder whether the valley isn't a circular trench. But it isn't. There are partial recurrences, but the sequence doesn't repeat.

C S Lewis

WHAT

Make a journey to a significant place. Search for colours, smells, textures, or sounds that remind you? Make sure you keep yourself and other safe and follow any guidelines. If you can't travel to the place you want, try to find somewhere that reminds you of it close by. I can't visit the beach of my childhood holidays but I could try to find something orange on a walk to remind me of the colour of our beach hut. I can't travel to Glasgow where my Dad lived but I could walk to Scotland Beck a few miles from my house.

Me and my friend Stephen Donnelly went on walks to remember our brothers; him in Swansea and me in Hamburg, Germany. We walked and remembered his brother Paul and my brother Jonathan. We ate nostalgic Burger King for Jonathan and listened to the Jurassic Park soundtrack for Paul as part of our journey.

You might want to plant a bulb or scatter some seeds somewhere significant as a secret marker.

#WaysToRemember



STONES AND SEA GLASS
GRIEF SERIES PART 2: THE RESERVATION

memory stones

3

HOW

Take some time to gather a collection of stones as prompts to remember to remember. Look for different shapes, weights and textures. Hunting for the right stones in your yard or as you drift is part of the process.

Find a quiet place to lay out the stones. You may want to sort them by colour, size or texture. As you handle the stones think about what they might signify.

Smooth stones are the everyday memories.

Rough stones are the difficult memories.

Sea glass, slate or unusual stones are the special memories.

AND THEN

Hold the stones and think about someone or something you have lost.

You can arrange these stones in a formation in your home and only you will know what they mean (unless you choose to tell someone). You could carry a particular stone with you as you move through your day or take it to a special place.

Remember to be kind to yourself, don't take yourself to a place that's too difficult to get yourself out of (physically and mentally).

This activity is adapted from one we used for **The Grief Series Part 2: The Reservation** which was an installation originally made for Queens Hotel in Leeds. People could discover different artworks and activities hidden round a hotel room.

#WaysToRemember



PEOPLE ENTERING THE UNFAIR AS PART OF BRADFORD FESTIVAL
GRIEF SERIES PART 4: THE UNFAIR

'bottle it up' letter writing

4

HOW

Anger and great sadness can be an energy. They can drive positive change or sometimes just need to be let out in a way that doesn't hurt anyone. Think about who or what you want to write about.

Write an angry or sad letter and we'll bottle it up so you don't have to.

You could write a letter to someone or something you are angry at. Or write a letter to someone or something you have lost.

EITHER

Send it to us at 18 Roundhay Grove Leeds LS8 4DS and we'll bottle it up for you in the vault. Please note, the contents of the letters are kept confidential and are kept in a secure bottle.

OR

Destroy it safely. Our favourite methods are shredding or burning in a safe place away from hazards.

Need a rant?

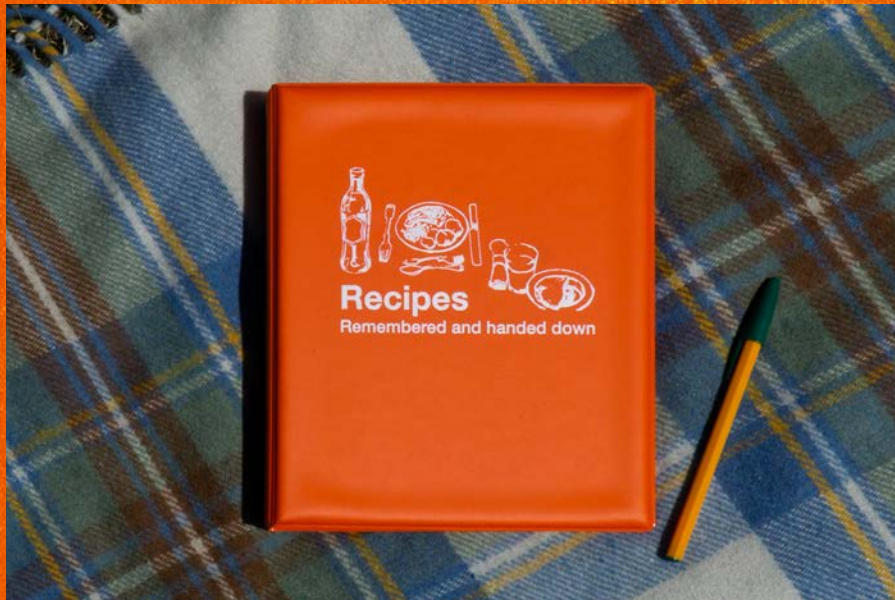
Write an angry letter.

We'll bottle it up for you.

This activity was designed for our angry funfair Grief Series Part 4: **The Unfair**. **The Unfair** was a free experience that popped up in parks, town squares, promenades and public spaces. It explored ideas of anger and whether it might be constructive as well as destructive. Inside were different stalls from 'Let off Steam' Angry Karaoke to 'Change Available' activism. The Bottle it up bar took pride of place in the centre of **The Unfair**.

People wrote letters to their exes, their boss, estranged family and children that had been lost. People wanted to let it all out knowing it was private.

#WaysToRemember



RECIPE BOOK AND CARDS MADE WITH MY MUMS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE 1960s
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

recipe card

5

This was made as part of **Grief Series Part 6: Journey With Absent Friends**. We created a museum in a caravan and this was one of the activities on offer. The recipe card uses an illustration drawn by my mum in the 1960s. Orange was her favourite colour.

HOW

Print out a copy and fill out the recipe card with a recipe that you were taught or one that has been handed down to you.

You may want to print out multiple copies to share with family and friends. How many family variations of grandma's flapjack are there? Who remembers that wonderful Christmas cake recipe?

It might be a good opportunity to rewrite old favourite recipes that have been scribbled down on fragile scraps of paper.

COOK

Keep your recipe safe in a file or folder. Find a time to follow the recipe and share the food with family or friends. Making a memory picnic with your favourite foods is a great way to spend time with your memories together.

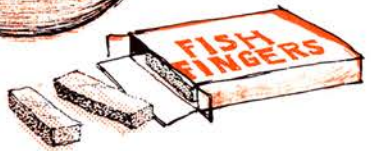
SHARE

To share your recipe with The Grief Series, send your completed card to us at 18 Roundhay Grove, Leeds LS8 4DS.

Alternatively, email a scan or picture of your recipe card. We'd also love to see a photo of the recipes you make or the meal you eat together: griefseries@gmail.com.



#WaysToRemember



A Favourite Recipe

Passed down from:

To:

Ingredients:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Notes and memories:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

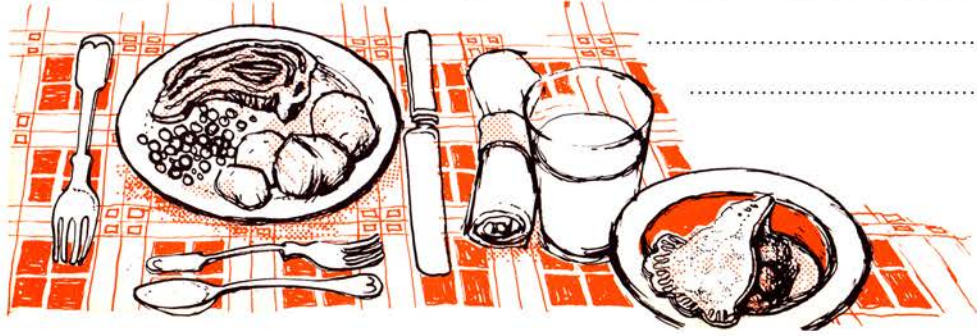
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Method:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

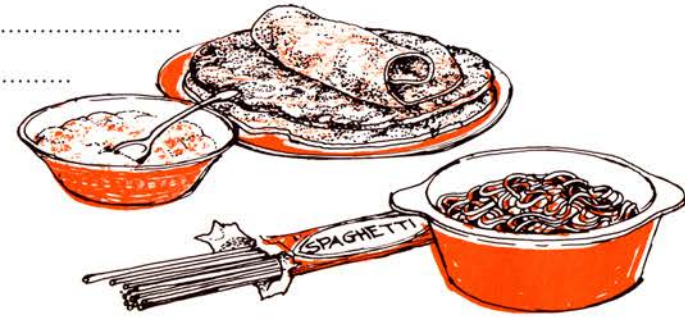
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE CONTAINING ACTIVITIES AND BOOKS
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

memory tins

6

This is an activity we've run in our research and development for **Grief Series Part 7: All That Lives**.

HOW

Take a moment to think of someone or something you'd like to remember. Find a container that feels a good size or type to contain these memories.

This could include:

- a pencil case
- a match box
- a shoe box
- a suitcase
- an old button tin
- a Christmas chocolate box
- a well-loved Tupperware
- a drawer in a cabinet

Dedicate this tin to the memory of someone or something you have lost.

AND THEN

You might want to decorate it on the inside or outside with a significant colour. You might want to store a special object or photograph inside it. You might want to put a particular smell in there (dried rosemary, a spray of perfume). It can be as simple or as elaborate as you want.

A young boy at a workshop decorated his tin pink on the outside. He then quietly showed me the photograph inside of his aunty wearing a bright pink sweater. "It was her favourite colour". He didn't want everyone to see the photograph and he wanted to keep it safe.

My friend and artist Hayley makes embroideries that remember her grandma and you can see her work on the cover of this booklet.

#WaysToRemember

The
Grief
Series



FERRY CROSSING TO ARRAN WHERE MY FATHER GREW UP
GRIEF SERIES PART 6: JOURNEY WITH ABSENT FRIENDS

Image by Matt Rogers

thank you

Booklet compiled and designed by Ellie Harrison and Bethany Wells with thanks to all **The Grief Series** collaborators, participants and audiences since 2010.

The Grief Series is a sequence of seven projects by Leeds-based artist and performance maker, Ellie Harrison.

The Grief Series is a quiet rebellion. It is a polite intervention. It aims to create a space where notions of bereavement or grief can be discussed openly.

May 2020



#WaysToRemember

@GriefSeries
GriefSeries.co.uk