

Self Help Guidebooks for the *REMEMBER, IT'S OK* Book Series.



Remember, It's OK – GUIDEBOOK TWO:

*For The One in Grief*

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The *Remember, It's OK* book series:

Remember, It's OK: Loss of a Partner  
Remember, It's OK: Loss of a Parent

Remember, It's OK: Loss for Teens  
Remember, It's OK: Loss of a Sibling or Friend

Remember, It's OK: Loss of a Pet  
Remember, It's OK: Loss of a Child

Creating a healing conversation around grief.



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## **About the *Remember, It's OK* series of books:**

*Remember, It's OK* are experiential books. You will live these books, not just read them.

Whether you are a man or a woman, these books will support and guide you. Whether you have lost a friend or family member, these books will help you. If you don't know how to help someone you know who is in grief, these books will educate you.

Grief does not know religion, gender or sexual orientation. We are all effected by loss in our lives. Everyone is invited to heal.

There are unique elements to the *Remember, It's Ok* series. In each book you will find colours, prose and poetry, and blank pages. The guidebooks give you greater understanding about these elements.

Throughout each Guidebook, and your *Remember, It's OK* book, you will learn about the journey of grief, hear the voice of a grieving person, read the responses of a caring support person and journey into a new paradigm for grief.

Together, we will create a healing conversation around grief.

## Key Elements

### **Colours**

Colours have universal themes that have resonated throughout history. The colour choices for Moments were instinctual for us from the beginning:

Red – survival, urgency

Orange – beginning to find self, immediacy

Yellow - coming back to self, growing awareness

Green - learning to balance self, learning

Turquoise - what path am I on now, increased awareness and curiosity

Pale blue - clarity of new path, beginning to move forward, increased openness

### **Prose and Poetry**

The *Remember, It's OK* series are books of Moments. These authentic expressions of grief are in the form of prose and sometimes poetry, written like private journal entries. They give the reader a 'moment', a glimpse into the experience of someone grieving, and an opportunity to observe the response of a caring support person or companion.

Each 'Moment' is an integration of many voices of those we interviewed during our creation process. It is not the voice of one person. We collected information and then created unique journal entries that fit into our colour paradigm. It was an arduous challenge. The result is that each 'Moment' has many who have felt and suffered and healed.

You are not alone.

### **Blank Pages:**

Every Moment in the *Remember, It's Ok* books have blank pages. This is space we gave you to breathe, pause and reflect before going forward to the next Moment. Some blank pages have a suggestion, offering concrete ways to experience and understand your emotions. These blank pages have been included for you to document your own grief journey.



## Guidebook Two: For the One in Grief

This downloadable PDF **Guidebook Two** will give you insights, directions and strategies to help you move forward in your own personal grief journey. It can be used as an individual or a small informal group of people in grief. (The experiential activities below for a group are designed to be done in person. However, if you have created a virtual group, the guidebooks will still work beautifully. If an activity needs to be adapted, we will indicate how in the activity.)

**Guidebook Two** will focus on the person who has lost a family member or friend. The one in grief. The goal of this Guidebook is to give you ideas about how you can use the *Remember, It's OK* books as an individual, or as a group of people coming together because they have experienced loss. This PDF will include suggestions and ways to work with the books as you navigate your own personal grief journey.

We have woven the activities into the three major elements that are presented in each book in the Remember series: Colours, Prose and Poetry, Blank Pages. We recommend working through the Colour activities, then Prose and Poetry and finally Blank Pages. You could also choose to do one Colour activity, then move to a Prose and Poetry the next meeting, and a Blank Pages exercise the next. Then go back and start again. There is a lot to digest in each section and you will want to decide how much you want to do each time.

The activities below can be done each day, a few every other day, one a week or over a long weekend. You decide what works best for you. You are encouraged to create a timeframe that works best for you and try to stick to it. If all the activities below are completed, you will achieve a very visceral awareness of the grief journey. However, feel free to pick and choose the activities you complete if you have time restrictions or feel it is too much for you emotionally, at that time. You can always return to complete an activity at a later date.

In order to understand how to use the *Remember, It's OK* books and Guidebooks, we suggest that you read **Guidebook One** first. **Guidebook One** explains our unique paradigm for dealing with loss, where we reveal the truth about grief and dispel long held misconceptions and myths.

Let's Begin!

## FOR AN INDIVIDUAL

Losing a friend or family member can bring emotions right to the surface of your skin. There's no hiding from them or running away. Trying to numb those emotions with alcohol or drugs will just prolong your journey. The tiniest incident, spoken word, musical lyrics, passage in a newspaper, book etc etc can set you off, trigger you. It is truly difficult and painful living in your own skin at the beginning of a grief journey. There's no other way to say it. It hurts. Right now, it hurts. It can be hard to eat, to sleep, to do almost anything. Right now. Our books help you begin to take small steps and we are with you all the way. So, try to take that first step. Keep reading this Guidebook.

It doesn't really matter if you lost your loved one years ago or days ago. Your grief journey begins when you are ready. You are here now. Good for you.

At the beginning of your journey, it is valuable to open your *Remember, It's OK* book. Maybe build it into your day. Possibly with your morning coffee, or in the evening with a warm beverage. It doesn't have to take more than a few moments, but it is a start, a breath, a movement forward. As you progress in your journey, you may consider taking a weekend away to focus on your grief journey. You can also work with a Moment once a week, rereading and fully feeling the emotions there, doing some of the ideas presented in this Guidebook. It is the intention of time that is important, so when the emotions get hard you can stick with it. Things will shift. It will get better.

Please keep reading.

## Colours

Normally when you pick up a novel you read it from front to back. But when you pick up a magazine or newspaper you can begin reading at the beginning, somewhere in the middle or near the end. You surf and search, moving around the articles until you eventually finish the magazine or newspaper.

Reading a *Remember, It's OK* book can be a similar type of surf and search to the magazine and newspaper rather than the novel. You don't have to read a *Remember, It's OK* book from front to back, you can, but it isn't required. There are no rights and wrongs.

The **Red Moments** of the *Remember, It's OK* books deal with the initial agonizing emotions and thoughts that can occur as a result of loss. Emotions and thoughts that will need to be addressed and experienced at some point, but they don't have to be done all at once. That may be asking a lot of yourself, and you want to learn to be gentle with yourself. Become your own best friend. When you pick up a *Remember, It's OK* book, maybe turn to a **Yellow Moment**, where the emotion is less raw. Or an **Orange Moment** that has slightly less edge than a **Red**. You can also turn to a **Pale Blue Moment**. A **Pale Blue Moment** allows you to see what you can achieve, how you can feel in time. It shows how you will be able to smile through your tears at some point. If your heart is still heavy, and you are at the beginning of your grief journey, you will feel resonance in the **Red, Orange** and **Yellow** Moments. Again, feel free to turn to a Green, Turquoise or Pale Blue Moment at any time. They still deal with tough, often uncomfortable emotions, but there is more breath and ease there. Then you can revisit the more intense colours and emotions and begin to learn to heal and to breathe in those oh so sensitive places.

It is best to become aware of what you need. Perhaps choose a colour and moment that will allow you to cry and begin to find some release. Or choose a colour and moment where you learn to see that you can smile behind your tears. Or you can randomly fan the book and stop at any place. Remember, this is your grief journey and no one can tell you how to feel or when to feel it. You may want to read and reread the same moment for a few days and really come to terms with the ideas and feelings before moving forward. That's perfect. You decide. You choose. You heal. It is your journey. There is no time limit. There is no right. There is no wrong. There is just the journey.

### Try this:

Write each of the six colours at the top of a page. Under each colour, write 5 words that come to mind when you think of that colour. The words can be feelings, food, images, people...anything at all. If you have more than five, great, keep writing until there are no more associations with that colour.

Now sit back and look at the words and the colours. Become familiar with each colour so you can know which one to turn to when that feeling arises. Return to these words a few times, add to the list if you feel so inclined. Go back and review the way we define the colours at the beginning of this guidebook. Are your comments similar, different?

### Next.....

Randomly choose a page in your *Remember, It's OK* book. Read the Moment. Can you think of reasons why this was included in this colour? Why would it not have been included in other

colours? Try and be as clear as possible in your explanations. Do this for a few pages and Moments. You can write your thoughts and impressions down on one of the blank pages in your book, or a separate notebook for this guidebook experience.

### **And....**

Build the language of these Colours into your day. When you wake up, ask yourself what colour you are feeling. Maybe turn to one of the Moments in that Colour and read what the support person has to offer. Or try a Blank Page suggestion. Try and check in with yourself a few times throughout the day and ask what colour you are in, see how you can shift yourself or just enjoy the moment. You can also give **Guidebook Three** to a friend so you can begin to talk in this colour language together. "I'm really in an Orange space today." "I feel in a sweet Turquoise place right now." This colour language helps give voice to your grief, one that is concrete and helpful. It allows you to identify clearing with how you are feeling on your grief journey.

## Prose and Poetry

The *Remember, It's OK* books are written using prose and poetry. This is another way you can select a moment to work with and read.

**Poetry** can be a gentle way into your emotions. A way to sneak in the back door. Sometimes a poem can give you more space to breathe and sit with individual words. Read and reread the poem you find in any colour, allowing emotions to rise to the surface. You don't have to do anything with those emotions, just let them rise, cry if you need to, be angry if you want to, have a box of tissues nearby and then let the emotions fall again. Have a big glass of water beside you. Hydration is important as your body tries to cope with your emotions.

As you progress in your journey and feel you can do more, have a pen or pencil beside you as you open your book.

### Try This...

On the blank page beside the poem you are about to read in a colour, write down how you feel before reading the poem. Then read the poem, maybe a few times; out loud and in your head. Poems feel and sound different when spoken out loud. Sit with your feelings for a moment. Then write how you feel after reading the poem. You can return to the same poem another day and see if your feelings have changed.

### Next...

Write down how you feel in this part of your day. Maybe express that feeling with a colour. Now read the poem again, or a different one in a colour that resonates for you right now. Write down three or four words in the poem that jump out at you. Circle two of them. Then, in point form or full sentences (or a recording on an app on your phone) record what each circled word means to you, why you chose that particular word. If an image comes up for you, draw it or describe it with words.

Finally, make a note about how you feel when you are finished. Is it different from what you wrote before you began? Remember, you can come back to this poem anytime. Other words will stand out next time. You can do this exercise with any poem in the book. You can also isolate key words in a prose section, or groups of words, and proceed with the same exercise.

The **Prose** Moments are written in first person like a diary entry. It is like hearing your own voice, your own pain, your own anger, your own frustrations, your own realizations. Sometimes, it will be the things you are afraid to say out loud. If you don't connect with the subject or content of the entry, focus on the emotions being conveyed. Ask yourself what situation may evoke that same emotion for you and then write that entry, your entry, on the facing blank page or one of the blank pages in the centre or at the end of the book. That's why we put those blank pages there, so you can write your own Moments, your own story. Not unlike poetry, prose will take on new life if read out loud. Maybe take your book to a private space in or outside the house where you can safely read out loud.

## Try This:

When reading a prose entry, you can focus on the *content* or the *emotions* being presented. Try to separate the two.

1. Randomly or consciously choose a Moment. Read it and then make notes about the content or subject of the prose entry:
  - did you experience this same kind of situation?
  - Did you keep it to yourself?
  - Have you found resolution? Is it still nagging at you?

Try and source out how you dealt with or didn't deal with that experience. What can you do now, even if it is just to write it down or speak it out loud.

2. Choose a different Moment and make notes about the emotions present in that prose entry. Read the Moment again focussing on the feelings or emotions within.
  - What happened to you that created similar emotions. You can explore those feelings by writing them down or just speaking them out loud. Trees and plants are great listeners. You don't necessarily need resolution to the feelings, just acknowledging them can be powerful and releasing.

You can do this with all the Moments, focussing on the content one day, and the feelings the next.

3. Read a Moment and focus on the words of the support person.
  - How do the words here make you feel
  - Write down the words that strike a real cord for you. Revisit them often.
4. Find a Moment (new or one you've already done). Read the Moment and then circle the words that stand out for you. Do this in pencil so you can erase your choices, because they may differ when you do this another day. Write the words you chose on the facing blank page.
  - What do these words tell you.
  - Write a poem using only the words circled.

You can do this exercise with any Moment, any day.

Please be sensitive to how you are feeling. The grief journey can be very difficult at the beginning. If it seems like you are 'stuck' in a depressed state of mind, can't get off the chair at all, refuse to eat anything or drink anything, please consider reaching out to a health care provider for help. If you are reluctant to leave your home or private space there are many excellent on-line practitioners. Your health care provider or a friend or family member can help you do a comprehensive on-line search, or you can do it yourself. Remember, it's ok to ask for help at any time in your grief journey. Please care for yourself.

## Blank Pages

Throughout the book we provide thoughts for things you can do to work with your grief. To mourn. It can help to soften emotions, help you find different paths through difficult events like birthdays and holidays, and give you ways to deal with things you may be avoiding.

You can deal with these suggestions as they come up while working with different Moments. You can also choose to go to a colour and find a blank page suggestion and work with that for a while.

Some of the suggestions require putting together collages, photographs, and writing out those thoughts bouncing around in your head. These activities can take a few days, weeks or months to complete. There is no rush. And when you've finished one, if you are inspired to create something of your own, use one of the other blank pages in the book or another piece of paper.

These suggestions we give become a tactile way for you to deal with your grief. Concrete ways to see and experience this journey. It is how you mourn, as we discussed in **Guidebook One**. Often this kind of kinesthetic learning can be highly beneficial as it moves you into a different sensory experience. Give them a try, make some notes of how you feel before and after you create something. It's okay to cry, or yell and scream, or just be silent....in fact, it's a good thing to express your emotions rather than keeping them contained. And please drink your water.

## **Final Thoughts**

As you work through your *Remember, It's Ok* book, you will be creating a journal of your loss. You will also find that though you may be alone as you work through this, you are being supported by the book itself. The voice of the one in grief, and of the caring support person, are there for you, so that you will know that what you are experiencing in your grief is OK. You are validated. You are supported. Remember, It's OK.

Your grief journey never ends, it just becomes filled with more smiles than tears.

**Bravo!!!**

**You have entered a new paradigm for grief.**

**You are now part of the healing conversation around grief!!**

## FOR A GROUP

Groups can be people coming together informally who have all experienced a loss and organize to come together for healing...with or without a facilitator. It can also be a family or group of friends who have all lost the same person they had loved. This Guidebook can help you find ways to proceed.

(If you would like more structure in your meetings, review some ideas in **Guidebook Four**).

The challenge working within a group is to not be afraid to show your emotions, to feel safe in speaking honestly. Often, we can feel self-conscious of thoughts we have, especially when they are so raw and possibly angry. You may find, once the group starts honestly sharing, that you all share the same feelings. Grief tends to discard any filters. It's the bare, raw bones of emotions, especially in the Red Moments.

If you are working in a group with no facilitator, it can be difficult to know where and how to begin. This Guidebook will help with that. Regardless of how large or small your group is, you have all lost a family member or friend and have come together to give courage to your journeys. One way to begin, is to put everyone's name in a hat or bowl and for each time you meet, draw out a name randomly and that will be the person who will take the lead for that meeting. It can be powerful to take the lead. It moves you into a different place in your own grief, offering a different vantage point. So, if everyone takes on that role at least once, everyone can benefit from differing perspectives. It also helps everyone to be involved and engaged. This will help you move forward on your journey. Of course, if someone is not ready or willing to take on that role, that will be respected. If you choose to work without someone in a lead role, that will work as well.

It doesn't really matter if someone lost their loved one years ago or days ago. If someone has decided to show up for the group, they know they are needing healing on their journey and would like the comfort of others. Everyone will benefit, regardless of where they are on their grief journey.

It is beneficial to decide on a time limit for your gathering and have bottles of water available or a warm beverage. No alcohol. The time limit is important because you may tire quickly and want to stop at a positive point. An hour and a half for a meeting is more than enough time. If someone feels it is too much, they are free to step away from the group and return after a few moments, or come back the next meeting. Even in a group, it is still an individual journey. Please don't overwhelm yourself. You have lots of time to heal. Try and make a commitment of time before you begin. 1.5 hours in the morning? Afternoon? Evening? Each day? Every other day? Once a week? Better if you make a time commitment that everyone sticks to. If you are taking a weekend, find some time at the beginning to decide how you will organize each day.

We have woven the activities into the three major elements that are presented in each book in the Remember series: Colours, Prose and Poetry, Blank Pages. We recommend working through the Colour activities, then Prose and Poetry and finally Blank Pages. You could also choose to do one Colour activity, then move to a Prose and Poetry the next time, and a Blank Pages exercise the next. Then go back and start again. There is a lot to digest in each section.

## COLOURS

You don't want any stress in the group. Heaven knows you are experiencing enough already. So rather than give choice (because making decisions can be very difficult when in early stages of grief. Turn to #9 in **Guidebook One** for more information on this) it may be better to leave things to random selection.

Write the 6 colours of the Moments on six pieces of paper and put them into a bowl or hat. A different person each meeting draws out a piece of paper and that is the colour you will work with for that meeting. If you have chosen a leader for that day or have a facilitator, that person can give a piece of paper to each person. Everyone will then have a colour to work with for that gathering.

- On a blackboard, smart board, chart paper or laptop, write down each of the six colours. Each participant offers a word (feeling, object, food, etc) that they associate with that colour. You are making a list of words for each colour. Leave this up so people can see it. Once each colour has been done, discuss how the colours have come to life and what they mean to you. Go back and review the way we define the colours at the beginning of this guidebook. Are your comments similar, different? Explain. Discuss.
- decide on a person who will begin, again through random selection or by a leader. That person chooses a Moment from the colour they were given. They read their Moment out loud. Each person takes a moment to reflect and then going around the circle each person comments on how they were affected by the reading. Remember, there is no right or wrong. The ability to just say out loud how you feel is the power here. Remember, if the subject or content does not resonate with you, talk about the feeling or emotion conveyed and how that echoes within you. Patience is needed to allow people to speak freely. No comments are needed. Sharing should be met with soft eyes, smiles and nothing more. A thank you when the person is finished reading or sharing is helpful.

You can choose a different colour for each gathering and proceed again with the activity. This will allow each person to get a feeling for each colour and the emotions that arise.

OR

- your group can also move through the book, Colour by Colour, front to back. This may be more stressful as you are dealing with only Red Moments for each person to begin with. You can decide if you all read a different Moment in each colour, or if you all discuss one Moment in each colour at a time. You don't have to do all the Moments in a colour, it depends on your time frame, your participants and your comfort level.

It is important to select the option that best suits your group. With each person having read this **Guidebook Two** in advance (and **Guidebook One**) your group will create what is best for your participants and their comfort level.

## PROSE AND POETRY

### Part 1:

Choose a colour to work with for each meeting, or each person randomly chooses a colour. Each person then chooses a Moment and will read their prose Moment out loud. After each reading, the group comments on the subject of the prose entry, how it made them feel, if they could identify with the speaker. Regardless of what colour the group is working with that day, uncomfortable feelings may arise upon reading Moments and you may find it difficult or feel awkward to say how you really feel. That is one reason we have written the moments with very powerful and often raw language; it mirrors grief at particular times. So, if you are feeling uncomfortable when it is your turn to speak, rather than focusing on your personal story, focus on the person in the reading, the one speaking in the Moment. Comment on how that person is feeling, how the subject affected them and how it looks through their eyes. This is another way to come in through the back door to confront those difficult emotions of your own.

You can do this for a different colour each meeting, or random reading each time. You can work with the subject of the entry one meeting, the emotion in the entry another meeting. Or blend the two.

For another meeting, focus on the poems. Each person finds a poem Moment (in a certain colour or randomly) and circles one or two words that really stand out. Next, try to articulate why those words stood out for you. Or talk about the feeling and emotion in the poem. If you feel comfortable, you can connect to your personal story and how the poem reminds you of something, someone or a feeling. If you are not ready to share your personal story, focus on the poem itself, what is happening in the poem and how it makes you feel and why.

You can then take the words you highlighted and write your own poem using these key words as a starting point. You can do the same exercise with the prose: highlight words that stand out for you and then write a poem using those words in that same colour. Or write your own prose Moment for that colour. After people have written their own poems or prose moments it would be great for them to be shared with the group. Highlight why you chose to write your Moment (poetry or prose) for a particular colour. This can be done as often as the group chooses.

### Part 2:

Once you have read, felt and commented on the prose and poems in the Moments, shift the focus to the voice of the Support person in each Moment. Allow your discussion to focus on words and phrases used by the Support person, and how they make you feel. Discuss how you have been addressed by people you know in your life; if it made you feel angry, awkward or supported. Talk about how you need to be seen and words you need to hear.....and words and phrases you do not want to hear. You will find that each colour will have different responses, but there will be a common tone and language used. Try to isolate the tones and vocabulary used by the support person. Discuss why these tones and/or vocabulary works for you, or doesn't work for you, and how that kind of conversation makes you feel with a support person makes you feel.

If working with a facilitator, this would be a good place for them to record these ideas and thoughts in order to refer back later.

Please be sensitive to how members of the group are feeling. If it seems like someone is 'stuck' in a depressed state of mind, please consider reaching out to a health care provider for help. If

the person is reluctant, suggest an on-line practitioner. A health care provider, a friend or family member can help do a comprehensive on-line search to find the best fit, or the person can do it on their own. Remember, it's ok to ask for help at any time in the grief journey. Please care for each other. And never hesitate to call 911 if need be.

You could also make this a group activity and search for grief therapists online so everyone has an option if they should decide that is a good option for them, at that time.

## BLANK PAGES

The magic of working together in a group with others who have suffered a loss, is that you work through emotions together. You hear what maybe you are feeling, coming out of someone else's mouth. This makes you feel less alone in your grief, which can often be very isolating. It validates you.

1. Perhaps on alternate days that you choose to meet, rather than working with Moments in a colour, work with the Blank Page Suggestions together. Show up with magazines where you can cut out pictures, your own photographs, bring crayons, pencil crayons or markers, and glue sticks. Bring writing pens or pencils. And then maybe the leader that day, or facilitator, will randomly choose a Blank Page Suggestion to do that day. The leader, facilitator or random person will read the Moment attached to the Blank Page Suggestion. And then each person proceeds to write that letter, or create that collage, or work with their photographs or whatever is indicated in the suggestion. Then after, you can show your work, if you want to, and allow your emotions to flow through discussion and validation. A few tissue boxes are helpful. (If this is a virtual meeting, everyone will have to get their own supplies but other than that, the activity can continue as above.)
2. Each person in the group writes down an item on a piece of paper; photographs, jewelry, sports gear, birthday, Christmas, cookies, pie, flowers, tools, tractors, fishing, etc etc. And puts them into a container. The facilitator, leader or random person will pull out a paper and read the item to the group. Then each person will turn to a blank page in their *Remember, It's OK* book and begin to write their own Moment in prose or poetry, noting the colour they choose. Go around the circle and allow everyone to read their moment out loud once everyone is finished. (If this is a virtual meeting, each person will write down 6 words and put them in a container and draw one out. The exercise that proceeds as above.)

After hearing the Moments, brainstorm with the group (maybe have someone record ideas, these could be emailed to each member of the group later) different Blank Page Suggestions for fully experiencing this item and how it affected you personally. Then, create this new activity on a blank page and share with others.

## **Final Thoughts**

As a group, discuss how you felt when you walked into the gathering the first day, and how you feel at the end of your meetings. Share how you will move forward and keep using the *Remember, It's OK* book. Exchange emails or numbers if you feel comfortable, so you have someone to call if you need a shoulder and/or validation.

Your grief journey never ends, it just becomes filled with more smiles than tears.

Remember, you can revisit the *Remember, It's OK* books over and over again, as a group, or individually.

**Bravo!!!**

**You have entered a new paradigm for grief.**

**You are now part of the healing conversation around grief!!**

**NOTE:**

If you would like to know more about our books (how we created them, about the colours we chose, what was our process etc) please go to our websites. There you will find podcasts, articles and pages that will give you more in-depth information about the books and how to care for yourself, as one in grief or as a support person. Each website will offer something unique.

RememberItsOk.com    MarinaLReed.com

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