



## Opening to Grief: Finding Your Way from Loss to Peace

**Claire B. Willis**

**Marnie Crawford Samuelson**

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Claire B. Willis and Marnie Crawford Samuelson's *Opening to Grief* is a companion for people facing loss.

Grief is a pressing force that often drives people to isolate or close themselves off to new experiences, but "grief and love are intertwined," Claire B. Willis and Marnie Crawford Samuelson suggest, and being open makes way for healing and new life. Their book harnesses wisdom from Willis's years of working with people experiencing grief, suggesting that hope can be found in accepting grief and engaging it, even seeing it as a companion.

The book's chapters examine entry points for ways forward, including nature, kindness, and art. Their approach is holistic, involving yoga and meditation for inner and outer change. All of the proposed perspectives and practices make room for individual circumstances, paths, and paces. They are contemplative and spiritual, showing that healing happens from the inside out. The text is packed with poetry, too, to further open hearts and minds through evocative imagery and surprising language.

The book's Questions People Ask section is powerful as it breaks apart myths about grief, such as that grief manifests in a particular order over a set amount of time. It dispels the shame that people feel when it seems like they're not grieving the way they should, providing in-depth, empathetic answers to questions like "how do I know if I'm grieving or actually depressed?" and "is it normal that I grieved more when my dog died than when my mother died from a stroke?"

Calm and persistent to help with facing grief and widening views beyond it, *Opening to Grief* suggests a caring path toward healing after loss.

MELISSA WUSKE (November / December 2020)

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