



# *Stuck* in Grief

## *When It Feels Impossible to Move Forward*

When a car gets stuck in mud, all forward motion stops. No matter how hard you push the gas pedal, the spinning tires can't gain traction against the slippery, pervasive mud. Grief is similar. It can be persistent, and when you get stuck in grief, it can feel impossible to move forward.

Getting unstuck requires purposeful effort in the right direction. The video and daily exercises will help you learn how to get unstuck, and how to avoid getting stuck. You'll discover:

- **Being "stuck" in grief is not about time; it's about not taking steps toward healing.**
- **Being stuck results from negative thought patterns.**
- **Bible reading & prayer defend against wrong thinking.**



# Video outline

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you may have while viewing the video.

## Signs of being stuck

---

Normal daily routines seem unbearable

Ignoring or numbing the pain

## Navigating traumatic grief

---

## **“Getting unstuck” from grief**

---

Getting traction in your thoughts

Getting help & giving help

# Step by Step

Daily comfort & encouragement



## Heather's story

"I started to feel like life was pointless. I just wanted relief from the pain. I would get intrusive thoughts like, *What if I just drove this car off the freeway right now?*"

*Heather struggled with self-harming thoughts for two years after her sister's death. Maybe you can relate to Heather's feelings of "What's the point?" and unhelpful thoughts that press you further into a pit of despair. This week's exercises will help you recognize patterns that lead to getting stuck in grief and know what to do to start moving forward in a healthy way.*

## 1 How to work through your misconceptions

Imagine having a map that was drawn incorrectly. You'd get lost and never find your way forward. The same thing happens when we listen to bad advice and believe the wrong things.

Here are five wrong beliefs, "myths about grief," that have caused people to become stuck in grief. Choose one or two wrong beliefs from this list. If a grieving person were to state that belief to you, what would you say to explain why it's untrue? (Base your answer on what you've learned so far in GriefShare.)

1. **Time heals all wounds –**
2. **Moving forward is disloyal to my loved one –**
3. **Progress means taking steps forward, but never steps back –**
4. **The lessening of pain indicates a lessening of love –**

5. **God took something from me that I can't live without –**

If you're not sure why some of these are myths, talk with your group leader.

## 2 What's on your mind?

Being stuck in grief is connected to the way you think. In fact, there's a strong connection between what you think and feel—and then do. Change happens when you renew the way you think. You can change your thought patterns by making a habit of evaluating your thoughts with truth found in God's Word.

### God's message to you

"We take captive [bring under control] every thought to make it obedient to Christ."  
(2 Corinthians 10:5b)

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2b)

#### 1. Which thought pattern sounds more like you?

- I miss my loved one so much. I cannot possibly go on. It's the end of the world for me.
- I miss my loved one so much. I'm not sure how I'm going to be able to cope, but with God's help I can make it through each day one painful step at a time.

#### 2. In order to renew the way you think, you need to look at the situation from a different perspective, in light of God's promises and truths. For instance, if you feel alone, you have to remind yourself *the truth is* God says He is always with me (Psalm 34:18); if you are angry about an injustice, *the truth is* God will make sure justice is served (Romans 12:19).

Write down a feeling you've been struggling with on the lines below.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

On the next line, prayerfully write down a truth from God that you've learned.\*

But, the truth is, \_\_\_\_\_.

\* You can find God's truths in this book, by searching keywords in an online Bible (e.g., biblegateway.com), or by asking a mature Christian friend. Take time to reflect on these truths.

## Remember

- Telling yourself the truth means acknowledging the pain, but also recognizing what God says about your situation.
- "If I allow myself to think, 'No one can relate to this. I'm really alone in this,' that's a lie. The truth is, God can equip other people to care for us." – Carla

### Characteristics of negative self-talk

- It's not true (or entirely true).
- It does not build you up or help you grow.
- It exaggerates the impact and extent of legitimate problems.

## 3 How to recognize and correct wrong thinking

What's an important part of battle? A strong defense system. When negative thoughts are bombarding your mind, focusing on God's truth in the Bible is the best way to defend yourself against wrong thought patterns. "When I have irrational, disturbing, negative thoughts," says Dr. Elias Moitinho, "I can replace them with the truth of God in His Word."

As you read the Bible, the questions below can help you think about what you're reading in deeper ways. This week, read Psalm 77, then reflect on the chapter using the questions below as prompts. (Online Bibles, such as [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com), can be a convenient resource.)

1. **What promises, if any, are in these verses?**
2. **Why would God want me to know what's in the passage I just read?**
3. **How does what I've read compare to the way I tend to think?**
4. **What do these verses reveal about God's character?**
5. **What would it look like if I applied the truths in this passage, or obeyed what it's instructing me to do?**



# 5

## Healing through *Writing*

### Healthy steps forward

Choosing to take healthy steps forward isn't always easy. Journaling about what you've done and how things are going will help you track your progress.

- **What myths, or untruths, about grief have you heard or been taught? What are the dangers of believing them?**
- **What negative thoughts have you been having lately? What have you been doing to defend yourself against them?**
- **Think about a sympathy card or encouraging note (print or electronic) that someone shared with you. Write how you feel about the sender's care and concern.**



At times you may feel you're taking more steps backward than forward.

For help, try

*Reflections*

A Guided Journal by GriefShare

[griefshare.org/journal](http://griefshare.org/journal)



## Chart your progress

Place a check in the boxes to identify how you are feeling this week: emotionally, physically, etc.  
Or, even better, insert a word to describe how you are doing.

	BAD	OKAY	GOOD	GREAT
<b>Emotionally</b>				
<b>Physically</b>				
<b>Spiritually</b>				
<b>Relationally</b>				
<b>How your life is in general</b>				

## My Healing

### Heather's story

"Going to GriefShare and counseling has really helped me, and also getting plugged into a church community. I started to feel stability after a few months, especially going through GriefShare. Grief was like a big piece of luggage that I was carrying everywhere. And now it is condensed to this tiny little purse that I'm always going to have with me, but it's no longer ruling everything and weighing on it all. I learned that we don't move on from our grief. We move forward with it. My sister is always going to be a part of my life."

#### Next session

Learn how to persevere with hope.