

Where to Go from Here: Book Recommendations



After each 18Forty topic, we want the conversation to continue—beyond our episodes and beyond us. Books are the medium that never stop speaking.

We have three books to deepen our thought on loss, to help us cultivate a larger language. For two of the books—Megan Devine’s and Julie Yip-Williams’s—we have excerpts posted on our website. Be sure to check them out. (All summaries are adapted or copied from the book’s public summaries.)

Here are our three book recommendations for where to go from here:

A Grief Observed



Review: “A very personal, anguished, luminous little book about the meaning of death, marriage, and religion.” — Publishers Weekly

Summary: Written after his wife's tragic death as a way of surviving the "mad midnight moments," *A Grief Observed* is C. S. Lewis's honest reflection on the fundamental issues of life, death, and faith in the midst of loss. This work contains his concise, genuine reflections of that period: "Nothing will shake a man—or at any rate a man like me—out of his merely verbal thinking and his merely notional beliefs. He has to be knocked silly before he comes to his senses. Only torture will bring out the truth. Only under torture does he discover it himself.

This is a beautiful and unflinchingly honest record of how even a stalwart believer can lose all sense of meaning in the universe, and how he can gradually regain his bearings.

Buy it on Amazon [here](#).

It's OK That You're Not OK

Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand



Review: "In this beautifully written offering for our broken hearts, Megan Devine antidotes the culture's messed up messages about bearing the unbearable. . . . Grief is not a disease from which we must be cured as soon as possible! Rather, the landscape of loss is one of the holiest spaces we can enter. Megan serves as our fearless, feisty, and profoundly compassionate guide." — Mirabai Starr, translator of *Dark Night of the Soul: John of the Cross* and author of *Caravan of No Despair: A Memoir of Loss and Transformation*

Summary: In *It's OK That You're Not OK*, Megan Devine offers a profound new approach to both the experience of grief and the way we try to help others who have endured tragedy. Having experienced grief from both sides—as both a therapist and as a woman who witnessed the accidental drowning of her beloved partner—Megan writes with deep insight about the unspoken truths of loss, love, and healing. She debunks the culturally prescribed goal of returning to a normal, "happy" life, replacing it with a far healthier middle path, one that invites us to build a life alongside grief rather than seeking to overcome it.

Buy it on Amazon [here](#).

The Unwinding of the Miracle

A Memoir of Life, Death, and Everything That Comes After



Review: “This memoir is so many things—a triumphant tale of a blind immigrant, a remarkable philosophical treatise and a call to arms to pay attention to the limited time we have on this earth. But at its core, it’s an exquisitely moving portrait of the daily stuff of life: family secrets and family ties, marriage and its limitlessness and limitations, wild and unbounded parental love and, ultimately, the graceful recognition of what we can’t—and can—control.” — Lori Gottlieb, *The New York Times Book Review* (Editors’ Choice)

Summary: *The Unwinding of the Miracle* is the story of a vigorous life refracted through the prism of imminent death. When she was first diagnosed, Julie Yip-Williams sought clarity and guidance through the experience and, finding none, began to write her way through it—a chronicle that grew beyond her imagining. Motherhood, marriage, the immigrant experience, ambition, love, wanderlust, tennis, fortune-tellers, grief, reincarnation, jealousy, comfort, pain, the marvel of the body in full rebellion—this book is as sprawling and majestic as the life it records. It is inspiring and instructive, delightful and shattering. It is a book of indelible moments, seared deep—an incomparable guide to living vividly by facing hard truths consciously.

With humor, bracing honesty, and the cleansing power of well-deployed anger, Julie Yip-Williams set the stage for her lasting legacy and one final miracle: the story of her life.

Buy it on Amazon [here](#).
