

Grief & Resilience — Workbook

This workbook is a compassionate companion to the Grief & Resilience course. Each section corresponds to a course module and gives you structured space to apply the frameworks you have learned to your own experience. Work through it at your own pace — there is no right speed. This workbook is for personal reflection and general education; if your grief feels unmanageable, please also reach out to a qualified mental health professional.

Understanding Grief — What It Actually Is

Map your grief experience against the Dual Process Model and name any losses that may have gone unacknowledged.

Exercise: Your Oscillation Map

Over the past two weeks, review how you have been spending your emotional and practical energy. Plot your activities into the two columns of the Dual Process Model to see your current oscillation pattern.

- List 5–8 things you have done or experienced in the past two weeks that belong in Loss-Orientation (LO): crying, looking at photos, talking about the loss, avoiding certain places, feeling the absence acutely.
- List 5–8 things that belong in Restoration-Orientation (RO): managing new responsibilities, planning ahead, time with friends not focused on the loss, working, hobbies.
- Looking at both lists: which orientation dominates right now, and does that feel right for where you are in your grief? Is there one small RO activity you could introduce, or one LO activity you have been avoiding?
- Describe what oscillation feels like for you personally — is it gradual drifting, sudden waves, or something else?

Worksheet: Naming Your Losses

Many grief experiences go unacknowledged because they do not fit conventional categories. Use this worksheet to name every loss — large and small — that may be unresolved or underacknowledged.

Loss description (what or who was lost)

Type of loss (death / relationship / identity / health / career / other)

How long ago it occurred

Whether this loss was acknowledged by others (yes / partially / no)

Current intensity of grief on a 1–10 scale

One thing you wish others understood about this loss

Checklist: Grief Myths I Am Releasing

- I understand that grief does not follow fixed stages in a fixed order
- I accept that feeling relief, numbness, or even moments of happiness does not mean I am grieving wrong
- I recognise that my grief timeline is my own — I will not impose another person's schedule on myself
- I know that resilience does not mean avoiding pain; it means being able to feel it without being permanently immobilised
- I have identified at least one disenfranchised or unacknowledged loss in my life
- I can name whether I am more naturally an intuitive griever, an instrumental griever, or a blend of both

Processing Grief — Evidence-Based Coping Tools

Practice expressive writing, explore your continuing bond, and build a personal nervous system regulation toolkit.

Exercise: Four-Day Expressive Writing Practice

Following Pennebaker's protocol, set a timer for 15–20 minutes each day for four consecutive days. Write continuously without editing. Use the prompts below as starting points — adapt them to what feels most alive for you.

- Day 1: Write about the facts and the feelings of the loss — what happened, and what it felt like then and feels like now.

- Day 2: Write about what this loss has meant for your sense of who you are — how has your identity shifted?

- Day 3: Write about what you wish you could say to the person, thing, or version of yourself that was lost — things unsaid, unexpressed, or unresolved.

- Day 4: Write about what this loss has changed in how you see the world, what matters, and who you want to be going forward.

Worksheet: My Continuing Bond

Describe the ongoing inner relationship you have with what was lost, and identify healthy, flexible ways to maintain it.

Who or what do I have a continuing bond with?

How do I currently maintain this bond (rituals, objects, thoughts, conversations)?

Is this bond currently helping me function and engage with life, or is it preventing me from doing so? (describe)

One new or intentional continuing-bond practice I would like to establish

A value or quality of the lost person or thing that I want to carry forward in my own life

Checklist: My Nervous System Regulation Kit

- I have practiced the physiological sigh (two quick inhales + long exhale) at least once
- I have used the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise during a moment of acute grief
- I have tried the orienting response (slow head scan) as a safety signal technique
- I know at least one physical intervention (cold water, movement) that helps me discharge acute emotion
- I have a self-compassion phrase I can use in difficult grief moments
- I have identified my most common grief trigger (sensory, date, place) and have a coping plan for it

Finding Meaning After Loss

Build your personal meaning-making narrative by integrating post-traumatic growth and values clarification work.

Exercise: Values X-Ray — What Loss Reveals

Use this exercise to extract your core values from what you miss most acutely. This is not an exercise in forced positivity — it is an honest excavation of what you care about most.

- List 4–6 specific things you miss most acutely about what was lost (focus on concrete, sensory details — moments, qualities, roles, rituals).

- For each item, ask yourself: 'What does missing this tell me I deeply value?' Write the value as a verb-phrase (e.g., 'to be unconditionally accepted', 'to create order and beauty', 'to feel purposeful at work').

- Which 2–3 of these values feel most central to who you are? How can you honour one of them in your life this week, even in a small way?

- Write your current one-sentence values statement: 'What this loss has shown me I most deeply value is...'

Worksheet: My Four-Part Narrative

Following Neimeyer's narrative integration protocol, write one honest paragraph for each of the four narrative sections below. You do not need tidy resolution — you need honesty.

Before — Who I was and what my world looked like before this loss

The rupture — What changed, what was lost, and what the hardest parts have been

What I carried through — Values, strengths, relationships, or qualities that persisted despite the loss

What I am building — Not a finished picture, but the direction I am choosing to move toward

Checklist: Post-Traumatic Growth Reflection

I understand that PTG does not mean the loss was good or that pain disappears

I have identified at least one domain where I notice some growth or change (personal strength, new possibilities, relationships, appreciation for life, spiritual/existential change)

I have written a chapter title for the period of my loss and one for the chapter I am entering now

I recognise that deliberate reflective rumination is different from intrusive uncontrolled rumination, and I am working to shift toward the former

I have written a current meaning-making statement and plan to revisit it in 30 days

I have shared some version of my narrative with at least one trusted person

Building Long-Term Resilience

Design your personalised resilience plan — covering support, routine, physical foundations, and long-term commitments.

Exercise: My Grief Support Map

Map your current and desired support network using the social convoy framework. Be specific — name people and resources rather than categories.

- Inner circle (1–3 people): Who can I call at any time, who I trust fully with my grief? Name them and describe what makes them helpful.

- Middle circle (3–5 people): Who is reliably supportive but with some limitations? What kind of support do they offer well, and where do they fall short?

• Outer circle (communities, professionals, resources): What groups, therapists, books, or online communities are available to me? Which one do I most want to explore in the next 30 days?

• Write one specific, concrete request you will make to someone in your inner circle this week (not 'be there for me' but an exact ask with a time and activity).

Worksheet: My Personal Resilience Plan

Complete each of the five resilience plan components with specific, realistic commitments. Revisit this worksheet monthly.

My grief coping toolkit (3–5 specific strategies I will use when grief intensifies)

My oscillation goal (one new RO activity I will introduce this week)

My support map commitment (one person for emotional support, one for practical, one community resource to explore)

My meaning anchor (current one-sentence meaning-making statement — to be updated monthly)

Sleep commitment (one specific change to my sleep routine)

Movement commitment (specific activity, frequency, duration)

Nourishment commitment (one realistic food or eating pattern change)

Difficult dates I am aware of in the next 90 days and how I will plan for them

One professional resource I will contact if my grief becomes unmanageable

Checklist: 30-Day Resilience Foundation Checklist

- I have completed my written resilience plan with specific commitments in all five areas
- I have shared my plan with at least one person who can help me stay accountable
- I have identified and scheduled at least one planned response to an upcoming difficult date
- I have been averaging at least 20 minutes of movement per day this week
- I have had at least one genuine grief-supportive conversation this week
- I have practiced my self-compassion phrase at least once when I noticed self-criticism
- I have revisited my meaning-making statement and noted any evolution
- I know the name of at least one evidence-based treatment (CGT or PGT) if I need professional support
- I have reviewed the resilience plan at the end of Week 2 and adjusted at least one commitment
- I am treating this grief plan as a living document, not a test I can pass or fail

Your Action Plan

1. This week: Complete the Naming Your Losses worksheet and identify any disenfranchised grief that has gone unacknowledged.
2. This week: Conduct your Oscillation Map and identify whether you are over-weighted in LO or RO — introduce one small balancing activity.
3. Days 1–4: Complete the four-day Pennebaker expressive writing protocol (15–20 minutes per day, continuous, unedited).
4. By end of Week 1: Complete the My Continuing Bond worksheet and establish one intentional continuing-bond ritual.
5. Week 2: Complete the Values X-Ray exercise and write your current one-sentence values statement. Take one small value-aligned action.
6. Week 2: Write your four-part narrative (Before / The rupture / What I carried through / What I am building). Share it with one trusted person if you feel ready.
7. Week 3: Build your Grief Support Map. Make one specific support request to someone in your inner circle.
8. Week 3: Complete your Personal Resilience Plan with commitments in all five areas (coping toolkit, oscillation, support, meaning, physical foundations).
9. Week 4: Identify all difficult dates in the next 90 days and create a brief plan for each one.
10. Monthly: Revisit your resilience plan, update your meaning-making statement, and note one shift you are proud of.

